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THE

ACCUSING SPIRIT.

A ROMANCE.

LANE, MINERVA-PRESS, LEADENHALL-STREET.

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THE

ACCUSING SPIRIT,

OR

DE COURCY AND EGLANTINE.

A Romance.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

DELIA, ROSINA, AND THE SUBTERRANEAN CAVERN.

" There was a time
" That when the brains were out, the man would die,
" And there an end."

SHAKESPEARE.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
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LEADENHALL-STREET.
1802.

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THE

ACCUSING SPIRIT.

CHAP. I.

" Qual, nell 'ore più freſche e mattutine
" Del primo naſcer ſuo, veggiam' l'aurora."

TASSO.

" BENEDICTA was once as innocent, as unperverted as yourſelf. Like you, ſhe looked down from the elevation of conſcious rectitude, with the ſuperior compaſſion of an angel, on that guilt, in which ſhe thought it impoſſible ſhe ſhould ever participate. Oh fatal and preſumptuous ſecurity! blind and infatuated principle, which

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ſeduced the angels from their thrones of light, from all the glories of encircling beatitude, and ſunk them to fiends of hell! Where is the innocent ſoul that, being ſhewn the gulph of vice, would voluntarily plunge into its dread abyſs? This baleful ſelf-deluſion conceals the perilous precipice with overſhadowing roſes—this moſt ſucceſsful engine of the evil principle which wages eternal warfare with the virtue of the human race!

"In the eventful ſtory of Benedicta, in her horrid crimes, and their dreadful retribution, behold its progreſs and its puniſhment!

"Roſalia Clementini was one of the younger children of the illuſtrious Houſe of —— But hark! the bell rings for veſpers; ſome of the Nuns, in aſſembling, will paſs this way. We muſt not be ſeen together."

She aroſe haſtily as ſhe ſpoke.

"May

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"May we not meet again?"

"Poſſibly; but if circumſtances ſhould not be favourable, I will leave the packet in the coffer which ſtands in the corner of your chamber. It contains the habit worn by Benedicta; beneath it are ſome papers which bear a reference to her ſtory. Theſe I alſo counſel you to take from hence. Adieu!" continued the Nun, haſtily embracing her; "may you be happy!—That lies in the breaſt of Fate; but Oh! remember that to be innocent reſts always in your own."

The Nun departed, as ſhe ſpoke, with the light graceful ſtep of an aerial being. Eglantine felt her ſoul impreſſed with ſolemn awe; ſhe ſunk on her knees beſide the tomb in the long wet graſs.

"Father of Spirits!" ſhe fervently ejaculated, "Oh let thy guardian mercies ſhield me from the contagion of ſin; or, while I

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am yet innocent, let the earth receive me to its protecting boſom !"

She followed the proceſſion, which ſoon entered the chapel, where the voice of Bertha aroſe in ſtrains of holy melody, more than uſually ſublime and angelic.

" Surely," ſaid Eglantine, " the intervening ſkies cannot long ſeparate this ſiſter ſpirit from her kindred angels !"

At night, when ſhe retired to her cell, ſhe found the ſealed packet in the coffer to which Bertha had directed her. It was ſuperſcribed—" To the Count D'Albane." It was large, and ſeemed to contain much writing. She then ſought for the other papers;—they were chiefly old letters, of which the paper was in many places ſo worn as to render them illegible. The firſt that caught Eglantine's eye, contained theſe words—the original was written in Italian.

BILLET

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BILLET I.

" Braviſſimo Signora Paulina! you performed your part to a miracle—no theatric Princeſs ever excelled you! Infatuated wretches, to bury ſuch talents in a Convent! What does not the world owe to the man who, by working a miracle, reſtored you from the dead to the living?

" Lovely, ſeducive enchantreſs! how ſhall I greet you? Alcina,—Armida,—imitate the verſatility of Arioſto's heroine, but beware the fate of Taſſo's; beware leſt this young Rinaldo, whilſt you heedleſsly exerciſe on him your power of irreſiſtible faſcination, entangle you in mutual fetters!

" Poor ſtricken deer! he haunts me like my ſhadow; he conjures me, by the fraternal obligation which unites us, to introduce him this night to your Caſſino.—Naturaliſts tell us that mice and birds run voluntarily

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into the maws of rattlesnakes.—I have made many difficulties to enhance the merit of compliance: I have business of the last consequence, but every motive yields to the ardour of his instances.—Expect us therefore at twelve."

This billet gave Eglantine, inexperienced as she was, a clear idea of Benedicta's guilt;—she had broken her monastic vow; she had sunk to the depth of depravity, for she had conspired with sharpers and deceivers to allure affection in the base intention of betraying it.

Whilst she meditated on this subject, one of the letters dropped on the floor. As she stooped to take it up, the writing struck her with extreme astonishment and trepidation, for it appeared to be that of the deceased Marquis. Trembling and agitated, she fancied herself on the eve of developing the mystery

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myſtery ſhe ſo ardently wiſhed to penetrate. The letter contained theſe words.

THE LETTER.

"Yes, I will perſiſt in diſobeying you—I will continue to perſecute you with my letters, reproach me as you pleaſe. I too have reaſon to upbraid. When I reſigned my ſoul, with incautious confidence, to the influence of the paſſion with which you have enſlaved it, I read in your eyes the auſpicious aſſurances of a correſponding affection. Fatal enchantreſs! do you ſmile but to betray, or is it thus you look on all men? I could poniard the rival whom I ſhould ſee you bleſs with one of thoſe bewitching ſmiles!

"Paulina, you have purpoſely deceived me—I am not an idiot, nor are you a novice. Your conqueſt was meditated. When

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I imagined I perceived in your artful allurements the ſoft blandiſhments of a reciprocal paſſion, I bowed my ſoul in willing thraldom to the ſweet dominion; but now when I find my peace has been the victim of your vanity——Tyrant beware! drive me not to deſperation! You have trifled with my tranquillity—I inſiſt on atonement—I will be heard!

"Speak not of my brother: his elderſhip confers no right to controul my actions; his interference can anſwer no purpoſe but that of embroiling us in irreconcileable diſſenſion.

"I repeat it, I will be heard! to-morrow I will be at the Caſſino!—meet me there at your peril!

"THE COUNT D'ALBANE."

From the contents of this letter, which was written with ſo much paſſion, and with ſo

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ſo little tenderneſs or reſpect, it was evident the writer, notwithſtanding the imagined ſimilitude of the character, could not be the Marquis. This was not only proved by the difference of name;—this D'Albane had an elder brother, who had conſpired with ſharpers to delude his inexperience, and enſnare his innocence.

Eglantine looked over ſeveral other letters, from the contents of which ſhe perceived that Paulina had afterwards either felt or feigned an extravagant paſſion for the young D'Albane; but they all conſpired to diſcountenance the idea that theſe papers would bear any reference to the fate of the murdered Marquis.

Eglantine made the papers into a parcel, and determined to deliver them into the hands of Father Francis immediately on her return to Berezule.

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CHAP. II.

"Now Hope's ſoft ſtar ſhone trembling on her love."

MISS SEWARD.

THE Baron came on the following day, according to appointment, and was received with unfeigned joy by Eglantine and Iſabelle, and with diſſembled courteſy by the Abbeſs, who was well pleaſed to be decently rid of her charge, and alſo highly gratified by the handſome preſents with which the Baron regaled her: for, ſtrange as the infatuation may appear, the paſſion

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of avarice never domineers with ſuch extravagant aſcendency as where riches can afford no gratification to the feelings of their proprietor, except what reſults from the conſciouſneſs of their poſſeſſion. Yet ſuch beings, and many ſuch there are, laugh at the fantaſtic tricks of the daw and pie, who ſteal gems for the purpoſe of concealing them in nooks and crannies.

Eglantine, though ſhe quitted the Convent with joy, threw back a look of regret to the walls which encloſed the fainted Bertha; whilſt Iſabelle was half frantic with delight at having eſcaped from that ſad repoſitory of living ſkeletons, to which ſhe ſeemed to feel an inſtinctive antipathy: for irreconcileable as the idea may appear with the deductions of reaſon, there are authors who maintain that a myſterious preſcience of future calamity often powerfully impreſſes the human ſoul.

The Lady Geneviora received Eglantine

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with much ſolemnity. The late ſhocking event had conſiderably weakened her ſpirits, and impaired her health; and the awful magnificence of the funeral ceremonies had greatly contributed to throw a deeper ſhade of gloom over the natural ſuperſtitious bigotry of her ſpirit.

The young Marquis wrote often to the Baron; but his letters almoſt entirely related to his reſearches for the diſcovery of his brother's murderers, and the immenſe ſums he had offered for their apprehenſion—reſearches hopeleſsly fruitleſs; the bloody tranſaction remain wrapped in the ſame impervious myſtery!

Two months elapſed:—the Baron fancied the Marquis had ſacrificed ſufficiently to fraternal affection, and that it was time to diſcontinue his melancholy ſtyle of writing, and turn his attention to objects of a brighter colour. But Eglantine was of a different opinion, and perceived in his reſerve,

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reſerve, delicacy to herſelf, and reſpect to the memory of his deceaſed brother.

Iſabelle received letters from her lover, perfectly ſatisfactory to her own feelings, and ſoothing alſo to thoſe of Eglantine, as they conveyed hints of the unabated attachment of the Marquis.

On her return to Berezule, Eglantine had repeated to her good Confeſſor the converſation ſhe had overheard between Ignatius and the deceaſed Marquis, and her own conjecture that the former might poſſibly be able to throw ſome light on the ſhocking cataſtrophe of the latter. She had alſo committed to his care the packet with which ſhe had been charged by Bertha, with the papers ſhe had brought from the Convent; and related the few incoherent circumſtances ſhe had learned reſpecting the ſtory of their unfortunate poſſeſſor.

The Monk liſtened attentively; he took the

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the packet, which he ſaid he hoped to have delivered according to its addreſs, by means of a friend who inhabited a Convent in Florence. Meantime he promiſed to queſtion Ignatius, and enjoined Eglantine's ſtrict ſecrecy in reſpect to this tranſaction.

The terrible ſenſations with which the murder of the Marquis impreſſed the mind of Eglantine, gave place, by degrees, to more tranquil feelings, for ſhe had been more horror-ſtruck than afflicted; and though ſhe lamented the manner of its diſſolution, ſhe could not reflect without joy on her being freed from a connection ſo utterly repugnant to her feelings. She was ſoothed with the remembrance that ſhe had fulfilled her duty with ſcrupulous exactneſs; ſhe relied with implicit confidence on the conſtancy of De Courcy; and bright viſions of future happineſs unfolded to her imagination.

CHAP.

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CHAP. III.

"A thouſand thoughts
"Begin to throng into my memory,
"Of calling ſhapes, and beckoning ſhadows dire;
"And airy tongues that ſyllable men's names
"On ſands, and ſhores, and deſert wilderneſſes!"

MILTON.

ONE evening, it was in the month of December, the Baron and the Lady Geneviora had retired early to reſt, and Eglantine alſo ſought her apartment; but, feeling no inclination to ſleep, ſhe deſired Marian, one of her attendants, to bring her a book from the library, which was at the further end of a long corridor.

"The

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"The library, Mademoiſelle," ſaid the girl, heſitating in confuſion, "it is ſuch a diſtance from hence!"

"How—a diſtance!"

"Not any great diſtance, to be ſure, if it were daylight; but the wind ruſhes through the great trees, and the long caſements ſo rattle,—and it is ſo dark!"

"Well, I do not wiſh you to go without light."

"If you will deſire Mademoiſelle Iſabelle to go with me."

"Why, ſurely," returned Eglantine, ſmiling, "you are not afraid of ghoſts?"

"Ghoſts, Mademoiſelle!" ſaid Marian, turning pale. Iſabelle darted at her an impreſſive look.

"No, not abſolutely of ghoſts," reſumed Marian, "but there is ſomething ſo ſolitary in that gallery; its high arched windows look ſo black and diſmal by night; and the light gleams ſo terribly on the frightful

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frightful faces of your old anceſtors, Mademoiſelle, that I ſometimes fancy they are ready to ſtart from their frames, and run after me; particularly the old gentleman, all in armour, with the white ſtick in his hand. Bleſſed Virgin! how I was terrified the night when——"

"What rodomontade is this?" interrupted Iſabelle, angrily; "if you indulge this ſilly wench in liſtening to her nonſenſe, Mademoiſelle, ſhe will never have done—ſhe is frightened at her own ſhadow!"

"Other folks could be frightened as well as I," returned Marian, pertly, "although they are ſo valiant when the danger is over."

"What folks—what danger?" ſaid Eglantine.

"I entreat, Mademoiſelle," ſaid Iſabelle, with earneſtneſs, "that you will not encourage the forwardneſs of this girl."

"I like to aſk her queſtions—her ſimplicity amuſes me. Come tell me, Marian, have you faith in ſpirits?"

"In ſpirits! Lord, yes to be ſure, Mademoiſelle;

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Mademoiſelle; ſure every one except a heretic," looking at Iſabelle, "muſt have faith in ſpirits!"

"And have you ever ſeen one?"

"Seen one! Oh, no, Mademoiſelle; I thank the bleſſed Virgin it was frightful enough without that."

"What was frightful?"

"Why, Mademoiſelle, I only heard——"

"What did you hear," interrupted Iſabelle, ſtill more angrily than before, "but the hollow wind murmuring through the keyholes? If you won't obey the commands of Mademoiſelle, I will go for the book myſelf."

"Aye, and take to your heels as you did on the night when the Lady Geneviora ſent you to the grand oratory for her roſary, becauſe you heard, as you were paſſing the chamber in which——"

"I will not brook this impertinence!" interrupted Iſabelle; "I entreat, Mademoiſelle, you will diſmiſs this girl; all the houſehold laugh at her credulity!"

"I may

"I may as well laugh at their's—they believe it as firmly as I do; and you know very well what Dame Maudlin ſaid: and, in troth, whoever hangs her for a fool, will catch a knave in the halter. But heretics, to be ſure, will believe nothing!"

"Get you gone, impertinent!" ſaid Iſabelle, taking her by the ſhoulders, and puſhing her to the door.

"Yet let her ſtay," ſaid Eglantine, "till ſhe has gratified the curioſity ſhe has excited."

"I can in five minutes tell the fooliſh ſtory, Mademoiſelle, which ſhe would employ half an hour in relating."

"Aye," ſaid Marian, "you will tell it your own way, to be ſure; but, ſpite of your tricks, ſooner or later it will all come out: for, as Father Hugo ſays, blood will have blood."

A freezing horror thrilled through the veins of Eglantine. Iſabelle angrily puſhed Marian out of the room, and ſhut the door.

"Iſabelle,"

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"Iſabelle," ſaid Eglantine, looking earneſtly at her, "there is ſomething in this buſineſs which you wiſh to conceal from me, elſe why not ſuffer me to amuſe myſelf with the ſilly prattle of this girl. I inſiſt on your telling me what were the circumſtances ſhe alluded to, and what your motive for ſo arbitrarily preventing her relating them."

"My motive was a very ſimple one, Mademoiſelle. There are ſeaſons when the ſpirits are too eaſily affected; the tale, of which our reaſon deſpiſes the ſilly inconſiſtency, may yet call up images of horror which leave a ſtrong impreſſion on the mind, eſpecially when related with the powerful perſuaſion of ſtrong belief. This girl frightened me one night with her fooliſh ſuperſtition."

"How happened it?" ſaid Eglantine; "tell me without reſerve."

"One night, when I ſat up ſomewhat later than uſual, I heard the Lady Geneviora's bell; and knowing that her attend-

ants

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ants had retired to reſt, I ſent Marian to anſwer the ſummons. She preſently returned, and told me, with ſigns of terror, that the Lady Geneviora had forgotten her roſary in the grand oratory, and had ſent her to bring it to her immediately; but, ſhe added, all her Ladyſhip's jewels could not tempt her to go for it, unleſs I conſented to accompany her; and told me a fooliſh ſtory of noiſes which had been heard in the corridor that leads to the oratory. Laughing at her credulity, I agreed to accompany her, and amuſed myſelf with her terrors till we arrived——"

"Where?"

"In the middle of the corridor, Mademoiſelle, where we heard——" continued Iſabelle, heſitating.

"What did you hear?"

"A ſound reſembling a long-drawn moan."

Eglantine earneſtly regarded Iſabelle, and obſerved that ſhe turned pale as ſhe ſpoke.

"From

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" From what chamber did it proceed ?"

" I cannot exactly remember."

" Was it from that in which——" Eglantine ſhuddered as ſhe ſpoke.

" I fancied," continued Iſabelle, without ſeeming to notice the interrupted queſtion, " I fancied it might have been a trick of ſome of the domeſtics, as I had often known them to amuſe themſelves with the ſuperſtitious fears of each other, and, ſpite of Marian's terrors, forced her to proceed. We found the roſary."

" And was there nothing more ?"

" Nothing; only that, as we paſſed that chamber on our return, we heard——"

At this moment one of the window curtains ſhook violently.

" Merciful Heaven !" hiding her face in Eglantine's lap.—It was the ſame hound which had followed Eglantine to the Convent; the animal had fallen aſleep in the window, and ſuddenly awaking, had ſhaken the

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the curtains in endeavouring to extricate himſelf.

" Such," ſaid Iſabelle, as ſhe careſſed the animal, " ſuch are the trifling incidents which agitate our ſpirits when we ſuffer them to be thrown into alarm."

" And why are your's thrown into alarm, Iſabelle, if the circumſtances be ſimply as you ſtate them? But what did you hear on your return?"

" Nothing, Mademoiſelle, but that, as we paſſed the ſame chamber, we heard a louder and more lengthened ſound."

" What did it reſemble?"

" It reſembled a groan; but if it was not one of the ſervants purpoſely concealed to terrify us, it muſt certainly have been the wind—I remember it was high that night."

" As your paſſing that corridor, at ſo late an hour, was merely accidental, it is highly improbable that any of the ſervants could have been concealed to frighten you."

" Then it muſt have been the wind: I remember the night was tempeſtuous.—

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A ſound, which is ſcarcely audible by day, in the ſtillneſs of midnight appears tremendous!"

"And is this all, Iſabelle?"

"It is indeed, Mademoiſelle; only that Marian, terrified beyond expreſſion, fled with the ſwiftneſs of a hunted deer; and I, ſilly that I was, caught her panic terror, and ran as faſt as herſelf."

CHAP.

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CHAP. IV.

"These thoughts may ſtartle well, but not aſtound
"The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended
"By a ſtrong ſiding champion, Conſcience!"

MILTON.

"METHINKS," ſaid Eglantine, after a pauſe, "I ſhould like to hear this noiſe—I will go myſelf for the book."

"You had better not, Mademoiſelle," ſaid Iſabelle, with an alarm which ſhe ſtrove to conceal.

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" What," ſaid Eglantine, ſmiling, " will you not venture to go with me?"

" Certainly, if you perſiſt in going, but——"

" But what, Iſabelle? You will certainly make me imagine that corridor is haunted, by your reluctance to ſuffer me to paſs it."

" There is no uſe in expoſing ourſelves to the influence of theſe imaginary terrors; there are, perhaps, few female minds ſtrong enough to reject them entirely."

" But if the ſound you heard were only the murmuring of the wind——"

" From whatever cauſe it proceeded," interrupted Iſabelle, with a look of horror, " it was dreadful! The ſame cauſe, a natural one doubtleſs," ſhe added with more ſerenity, " which then operated, may again produce it. In fine, my dear Mademoiſelle, I have no taſte for theſe melancholy murmurings which inſpire gloomy ideas. Here, I have found a book which I think will amuſe you more than that you wiſh for. Shall I read to you?"

" Iſabelle,"

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" Iſabelle," ſaid Eglantine gravely, " I doubt you have partially related this adventure."

Iſabelle began to read without replying, and Eglantine continued to work at her ſilver netting.

The above converſation, ſimple as it may ſeem, made a ſtrong impreſſion on the mind of Eglantine, and after ſhe was in bed, recurred ſtrongly to her memory. The apartments of that corridor were the grand oratory, the library, a ſtate drawing-room, and three bedchambers, with their adjoining dreſſing-rooms and cloſets, which were uſually reſerved for the uſe of ſuch gueſts of ſuperior rank as might arrive at the Caſtle. In the principal of theſe chambers the body of the murdered Marquis had been laid in ſtate; and though Iſabelle had purpoſely ſuppreſſed the circumſtance, Eglantine plainly perceived that it was from this the ſounds had iſſued. In reſpect to

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theſe ſounds Iſabelle had alſo varied in her evidence; treating them at one time as originating in ſome trifling circumſtance,—and, again, when there appeared a probability of their being heard by Eglantine, acknowledging that they were terrific: her perturbation too, at the accidental agitation of the curtains, ſhewed a mind deeply diſturbed, notwithſtanding her efforts to conceal her feelings in the fear of communicating them; and, above all, her extreme reluctance to ſuffer Marian to introduce the ſubject, was remembered, and reflected on.

Eglantine, conſidering the age in which ſhe lived, was not ſuperſtitious; but to have utterly rejected the belief that, on momentous occaſions, the ſouls of the departed were permitted to return to the ſcenes of their former exiſtence, would have been eſteemed a ſpecies of infidelity: and, if the ſoul did return, what more ſolemn call could awake it from the ſleep of death, than when the guilt of undiſcovered murder cried

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cried aloud for conviction and retribution? Allowing, however, for the influence of superstitious terror, she determined to examine the alarming circumstances with caution and candour before she allowed herself to credit their supernatural origin. In these gloomy ruminations, she passed the greatest part of the night; and the morning found her oppressed with unusual dejection.

Entering the saloon next morning, where she expected to meet the Baron, from whom she determined to keep the ideas which then predominated in her mind a profound secret, she found the Monk Ignatius alone. He entered into conversation with his usual affability.

"You don't appear in spirits," said he; "you are well I hope?"

"Yes, very well: I have only rested ill."

"Your repose has not been disturbed, I hope, by the hobgoblins who are said to infest this Castle?"

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" What! have you too heard of them!"

" Oh yes, I have heard ſtrange tales, to which I give all the credit they deſerve."

" You regard ſuch ideas then as utterly chimerical."

" In general they are ſo. Few there are who have not at ſome times ſuffered their ſenſes to become the dupes of the imagination. On ſuch occaſions, when I have determined to overcome my fears, and coolly to inveſtigate the occaſion of my alarm, I have been aſtoniſhed at the trifling circumſtances which have thrown my feelings into perturbation, and miſled my reaſon. I would, therefore, counſel all perſons, before they deliver their minds to the influence of terror, to examine with diſpaſſionate accuracy the objects which excite this painful and dangerous ſenſation, which, operating with the magic of a ſorcereſs, metamorphoſes the moſt common objects to phantoms of ſuperhuman horror. Such," continued the Monk, " is the natural effect of ſuperſtition on prejudiced and uncultivated minds:—

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thoſe of a ſuperior ſtamp will ſcrutinize with jealous attention ſuch circumſtances as are ſuppoſed to reſult from preternatural cauſes, before they yield them credence."

Eglantine made no reply; but treaſured the words of the Monk in her memory, determined to profit by the inſtruction they conveyed. The events of the day baniſhed the idea of the haunted corridor from her memory; but when ſhe retired for the night to her apartment, it returned to her mind with a horror, which, though ſhe ſeverely cenſured it, ſhe could not vanquiſh. Recollecting the words of the Monk, ſhe determined to inflict on herſelf a voluntary penance, and reſolved to go alone to the corridor when her attendants had retired. Iſabelle ſat with her till it was late, and ſeemed unwilling to quit her when ſhe at length withdrew. Eglantine waited till the houſe was ſtill; then, taking her roſary in one hand, and her lamp in the other, quitted her apartment, and directed her ſteps to the

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grand oratory. She ſtopped at intervals to liſten. The night was remarkably ſerene; not a ſound was heard throughout the ſpacious manſion except the ſhrill chirpings of the cricket.

CHAP. V.

"Hark! peace!
"It was the owl that ſhriek'd—the fatal bellman
"That gives the ſtern'ſt good night!"

SHAKESPEARE.

THUS Eglantine proceeded till ſhe arrived at the corridor, where ſhe again ſtood to liſten. Encouraged by the ſtillneſs, ſhe ſoftly advanced, and as ſhe looked around

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around on the pictures which covered the walls, she recollected Marian's description of her ancient ancestors, and smiled at the apt similitude. She advanced to the door of the apartment where the Marquis had been laid in state:—she paused, and looked at it; it recalled a train of sad circumstances to her mind; the figure of the Marquis, pale, bloody, expiring, such as she had seen him on the night when the murder had been perpetrated, seemed present to her imagination. Absorbed in the contemplation of the terrible spectacle thus strongly revealed to her mental vision, she stood fixed and absent, till her attention was recalled by a sound. Suddenly starting, she dropped her lamp, which was instantly extinguished. Endeavouring to tranquillize her spirits, she found she could not, on recollection, ascertain what the noise resembled, nor from what chamber it had proceeded. Chiding her fears, she stooped to take up the lamp. There was no moon, but the stars shone bright. She

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was preparing to return to her chamber to rekindle her lamp, when a deep and hollow groan burſt from the chamber to which ſhe ſtood oppoſite. She wiſhed to fly, but her ſtiffening limbs forbade the effort;—her reſpiration ceaſed, her hair ſtood upright! Yet her fortitude did not entirely forſake her; ſhe ſtill endeavoured to combat her fears, till another louder and longer repetition of the ſame dreadful ſound left no room for doubt. Her blood, which had ſeemed congealed with ſudden revulſion, flew back to her heart; fear lent her wings, and ſhe fled precipitately towards her own apartment.

On turning from the corridor, ſhe perceived a diſtant gleam of light; and ſeeing Iſabelle, ſhe haſtened to her, and almoſt fainted in her arms. Iſabelle ſupported her to her chamber, where, when ſufficiently revived and tranquillized, ſhe repeated the circumſtance as it had occurred to her. Iſabelle liſtened without ſurpriſe.

"I had

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"I had a ſtrong ſuſpicion of your deſign," ſaid ſhe, "and therefore, inſtead of going to bed, determined to ſit and watch you. The ſilence and caution with which you proceeded, deceived my vigilance; nor ſhould I have ſuſpected your excurſion, but for the noiſe occaſioned by the falling lamp."

"Holy Virgin," cried Eglantine, "what can this mean? Can it be in reality the——"

"Time may develop the myſtery," ſaid Iſabelle, "which I ſtill feel ſtrongly inclined to believe may yet be traced to ſome contrivance to terrify us."

"With what intention," ſaid Eglantine "could ſuch a farce be acted?"

"Heaven only knows! yet that ſuch farces have been acted we have both heard and read."

"Iſabelle," ſaid Eglantine, ſmiling, "they ſay you are a heretic; and a heretic, I ſuppoſe, is near akin to an infidel."

The young friends paſſed the remainder of that ſleepleſs night together; and next

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morning Father Francis was ſummoned, to whom Eglantine confided the ſubject of her late alarms. He treated it nearly as Ignatius had already done; and ſeemed inclined to impute the noiſes which had terrified her and others, to ſome natural cauſe. He promiſed he would remain that night at the Caſtle, and endeavour to develop it.

When Eglantine met her Confeſſor on the following morning, ſhe earneſtly examined his countenance, and was ſomewhat ſurpriſed to obſerve that it wore a more ſmiling air than uſual.

"Well, Father," ſaid Eglantine, eagerly, when ſhe found an opportunity of queſtioning him alone, "did you viſit the corridor laſt night?"

"I did."

"Well, did you hear any ſounds?"

"Yes, moſt lugubrious ſounds!"

"Well, you are now convinced?"

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"I am indeed," replied the Monk, ſmiling at her earneſtneſs. "But though the ſounds I heard were terrifying, and ſomewhat ſtartled me, inſtead of dropping my lamp, and running away, I availed myſelf of its light to inveſtigate the occaſion of my alarm. I advanced to the chamber from whence the ſound proceeded; but on opening the door, a ſcreech-owl of enormous ſize flapped its wings in my face, and extinguiſhed my light. This moping melancholy bird, which, I ſuppoſe, has been accuſtomed to get in at the windows, in purſuit of the prey it lives on, and to remain during the night in thoſe apartments, is, I am perſuaded, the only ſpectre by which they are haunted; and had it been ſeen by you or Iſabelle, your fears would have transformed it into an infernal harpy."

Eglantine was fully perſuaded that the ſounds ſhe had heard had not been made by a bird; ſhe, however, forbore to expreſs this conviction, in the fear of exciting the good-

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good-natured ridicule of the Monk. But Iſabelle appeared ſtrongly inclined to credit his ſuppoſition, and to believe that the owl had been the real cauſe of their alarm.

From this period Eglantine was eternally diſturbed by tales of noiſes and appearances, which, no longer confined to the haunted corridor, were heard and ſeen in all parts of the Caſtle and its environs; ſome, as it was pretended, exhibited in forms ſo abſurdly whimſical, as clearly to denote the parentage from whence they ſprung, and to prove them the monſtrous and miſhapen offspring of ſuperſtition.

CHAP.

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CHAP. VI.

NOT many miles distant from Berezule stood another ancient Gothic edifice, much resembling it in situation and architecture; but, from the long absence and neglect of its proprietors, the building was falling fast to ruin, the walls were dilapidated, the courts overgrown with grass and weeds, and the furniture decayed and moth-eaten.

This Castle and its appertaining grounds had once belonged to the family of D'Orival, and had been assigned as a portion to one of the collateral branches of the family. Its present

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preſent poſſeſſor, the Count De Gerneval, immerſed in the pleaſures and ſolicitudes of the faſhionable world, had ſcarcely recollected he was owner of this ſolitary ruin, till the dream of diſſipation in which he and his Counteſs had long indulged themſelves, was finally diſperſed by the rude clamours of his creditors. Wearied with falſe promiſes and unfair evaſions, they at length ſeized on his property, which was ſequeſtered for the payment of his debts, allowing for his maintenance ſo ſmall an annuity as was inſufficient to permit him to appear with decency in Paris. Baniſhed from that ſcene of his pleaſures, that theatre of his exploits, he remembered he had a chateau in Gaſcony, where he gratified his pride in reflecting that his income, though ſo inadequate to his expences in Paris, might enable him, in ſome meaſure, to ſupport the ancient dignity of his family. In this ſolitude he therefore determined to bury the ſpleen excited by his altered fortune, and to ſhun, by a voluntary

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tary exile, the bitter ſcorn which the ruin that is drawn on our heads by our own vices and follies, is ſure to attract even from the moſt reſpectable of mankind.

The Counteſs acquieſced with tears and regret in a meaſure which ſhe could not prevent. She had partly participated the folly, but not the vice, of her huſband; as, to ſpare himſelf the trouble of liſtening to her diſagreeable expoſtulations, he had kept her in utter ignorance of the true ſtate of his finances, till ſhe found herſelf unexpectedly involved in his inevitable ruin. The Counteſs, though ſhe had ſuffered herſelf to be enſlaved by the prevalence of faſhion, poſſeſſed integrity of heart, and now vainly lamented the ſums ſhe had ſquandered at play, or diſſipated in modiſh luxuries. Yet could ſhe have recalled them, they would only have deferred the ruin they could not have prevented; for the Count had yielded to his paſſions till they became his maſters—till he no longer poſſeſſed ſtrength to reſiſt,

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or even virtue to regret, their ſtrong predominance. Amongſt theſe paſſions, the love of gaming poſſeſſed unrivalled ſway—that deſtroying fiend whoſe inſatiable avidity no ſacrifice can content whilſt another remains to be made—who with equallizing fury levels the fortunes of the mighty with the duſt, and turns the high in hereditary honour from the ſplendid manſions of their anceſtors, to ſhelter their houſeleſs heads in the miſerable hut of poverty—poverty not cheered by honeſt induſtry, nor gilt by the ſunſhine of approving conſcience, but imbittered by the upbraidings of ſelf-reproach, and envenomed by the inſulting deteſtation of mankind.

But the Count knew how to gild his vices with a ſhew ſo fair and plauſible, that his ſpecious eloquence diminiſhed them to errors; and often by the voluntary and apparently candid confeſſion of his faults, he gained more in the pity of his auditors, than he loſt in their eſteem.

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The Count and Counteſs on their arrival at their chateau were immediately viſited by the family of D'Orival, to which the Count was a diſtant relation. He was not yet forty; his perſon was handſome, his air elegant, and his converſation highly entertaining. He ſpoke of his baniſhment from Paris as of a temporary retirement, which his own heedleſſneſs of temper, co-operating with the knavery of an agent in whom he had too partially confided, had rendered neceſſary to the proper re-eſtabliſhment of his affairs. He then gave the outline of the plan he had adopted for the regulation of his future conduct, expatiated ſo much on the ſubjects of his economy, punctuality, good faith in his dealings, and particularly on his tender attention to the feelings of his creditors, that the Baron, Lady Geneviora, and Eglantine, liſtening with pleaſed attention and confiding credulity, admired his equitable plan of voluntary privation, and ſecretly regretted that unfortunate circumſtances had conſpired with his own venial errors,

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errors, to deprive ſociety of the animating example of ſuch a man as the Count.

The Count, meantime, laughed at their eaſy ſimplicity of belief, and exulted in the pernicious artifice which thus enabled him to give to his paltry tinſel the luſtre of ſterling gold.

The family of D'Orival were leſs delighted with the Counteſs, for her brow was marked with the character of the diſcontent which preyed upon her ſoul, and ſhe was too artleſs to conceal her feelings; beſides, the Count's falſe and inſinuating repreſentations of his own character excited her contempt, and the diſpleaſure, which, on ſuch occaſions, clouded her countenance, was often miſconſtrued by the misjudging ſpectator as an indication of ill-humour. They, however, ſaw ſhe was polite; and the ſtrong partiality which, on their firſt interview, ſhe ſhewed to Eglantine, could not fail

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fail to conciliate the benevolence of a heart ſo grateful.

The Count and Counteſs accepted the Baron's invitation to paſs ſome weeks at Berezule, on condition that Eglantine ſhould accompany them to their chateau on their return. The family of D'Orival were that night the gueſts of the Count and Counteſs, and next day the party removed to Berezule.

CHAP.

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CHAP. VII.

" The times have been
" That when the brains were out, the man would die,
" And there an end."

SHAKESPEARE.

THE apartments of the haunted corridor were, through particular reſpect, allotted, by the orders of the Lady Geneviora, to the accommodation of the Count and Counteſs. To this arrangement Eglantine felt inclined to object, which ſhe knew not how to do without confeſſing her ſecret reaſon, againſt which ſhe was fully determined; and Iſabelle ſtrenuouſly adviſed her not to interfere in this

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this matter, and ſuggeſted that the myſterious cauſe of their alarm might probably be cleared up by the Count, eſpecially if, as ſhe ſtill imagined, it exiſted in circumſtances not ſupernatural.

Eglantine, wearied with the ſolemn ſolitude of Berezule, and conſiderably depreſſed by the occurrence of recent circumſtances, rejoiced in an acceſſion of ſociety which promiſed ſo ſeaſonable a relief to her ſpirits. The Count poſſeſſed that volatile gaiety which, ſunk one hour in cauſeleſs ſpleen, riſes the next to exhilaration as unmeaning; in the latter moods he was a moſt animating companion, and when in company, he was commonly ſucceſsful in the pains he took to rouſe himſelf from the former.

The third morning after the arrival of the Count and Counteſs at Berezule, the Counteſs ſent an apology for not coming to breakfaſt, on account of having reſted ill at night.

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night. Eglantine felt ſome alarm; an idea occurred to her that the Counteſs might have been diſturbed by the noiſes ſo often heard in thoſe apartments, and immediately viſited her in her dreſſing-room. The Counteſs looked pale, complained much of the head-ach, and expreſſed a fear leſt ſhe ſhould be obliged to return to her chateau ſooner than ſhe had at firſt intended. After ſome further converſation, ſhe abruptly aſked Eglantine whether any perſon occupied the adjoining apartments?

Eglantine, colouring at the queſtion, anſwered it in the negative. The Counteſs examined her countenance as ſhe ſpoke.

"From what I heard laſt night," ſaid ſhe, ſtill earneſtly regarding Eglantine, "I imagined thoſe chambers muſt have been occupied."

"What did you hear?" ſaid Eglantine eagerly.

"I

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"I perceive, my dear Eglantine," returned the Counteſs, "that the ſubject I am going to mention is not new to you, and will therefore ſpeak without reſerve.—The ſecond night after my arrival, my woman, whilſt undreſſing me, told me wonderful ſtories of noiſes which had been heard, and apparitions which had been ſeen in theſe apartments. Though by no means an infidel in caſes of this nature, I imputed the tales ſhe had gathered amongſt the ſervants, to the effect of the ſuperſtitious horror which a late tragical event might naturally inſpire; and when I retired to reſt, thought no more of the matter, and ſlept ſoundly. Laſt night, you know, we ſeparated early; but the Count, having an averſion to regular hours, perſuaded Father Ignatius to remain with him to play at cheſs after our departure. When undreſſed, I diſmiſſed my woman, and, ſeating myſelf at the fire, began to read. I read with ſo much attention that, for an interval, I did not

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heed ſome indiſtinct ſounds which iſſued from the adjoining apartment (that which has been aſſigned to the Count), till a deep groan ſuddenly arouſed me. Imagining the Count might have been taken ſuddenly ill, I immediately opened the door of communication, and entered his chamber. There, to my ſurpriſe, I found all dark and ſilent. As I looked around, conſidering from whence the groan I had heard could have proceeded, the wood in the chimney darting a ſudden flame, diſcovered to my view a tall figure at the oppoſite end of the chamber!"

"A tall figure! Bleſſed Virgin! What did it reſemble?"

"It was the figure of a man: the features I could not diſtinguiſh, nor the dreſs correctly. Struck with wonder, yet fancying the indiſtinct light might occaſion ſome deception of viſion, I conſidered it more ſtedfaſtly, and more diſtinctly perceived the object of my alarm, which, now waving its right

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right hand with ſolemn dignity, motioned me to retire."

"Almighty Powers!" exclaimed Eglantine, "it is then too true! Could you not diſtinguiſh the dreſs, the perſon, the countenance?"

"You may well imagine I did not wait to make critical obſervations; yet I remembered to have ſeen the deceaſed Marquis in Paris, and I could almoſt fancy that this figure ſtrongly reſembled him."

"Bleſſed Virgin!"

"I flew back to my chamber, where, though the light ſomewhat relieved my ſpirits, I had only time to ring violently before I ſunk on the floor in a ſwoon. The call was not obeyed, for, on reviving ſome time afterwards, I found myſelf alone, and thus I continued in a ſtate I need not deſcribe, till I heard the voices of the Count and his valet-de-chambre in the adjoining chamber. The Count, on my calling him to me, was much ſurpriſed at the ſtate in

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which he found me; but I afterwards repented my telling him the occaſion of my illneſs, as, inſtead of exciting his compaſſion, it provoked his raillery, and he poſitively inſiſted that my fooliſh feminine fears had, with Promethean ingenuity, given life and motion to the old figure of Leonidas in the tapeſtry, which, being ſuppoſed to harangue his little band of heroes, ſtands with its hand raiſed in an attitude not unlike that of the figure which I inſiſted I had ſeen.—In fine, incenſed at his provoking ridicule, I deſired him to begone, and ſend his valet to call my woman. When Julette came, ſhe found me in great emotion, the cauſe of which I did not conceal from her. I kept her with me, and you may eaſily conceive what a diſmal ſleepleſs night I ſpent.—And now, my dear Eglantine, how ſhall I extricate myſelf from my embarraſſment? I know not what reaſon I can alledge to the Baron and the Lady Geneviora for my ſudden departure; neither can I reſolve to remain any longer in

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in a place where I ſhall be ſubject to ſuch terrible alarms!"

The entrance of the Counteſs's woman prevented farther converſation, and Eglantine ſought Iſabelle to communicate to her the circumſtances related by the Counteſs.

Iſabelle was ſtrongly inclined to adopt the opinion of the Count, and to conclude that the Counteſs, whoſe imagination was replete with the tales ſhe had learned from her woman on the preceding evening, might eaſily have transformed the figure in the tapeſtry, which was uncommonly ſtriking and prominent, into ſuch a viſion as ſhe fancied ſhe had ſeen. Its ſituation in the chamber exactly accorded with that aſſigned by Madame to the apparition. Nothing ſeemed wanting to it but motion; and this the powerful operation of diſtempered imagination, aſſiſted by the wavering light of the wood embers, might without difficulty have given it.

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"But how," faid Eglantine, "can you account for the groan which firſt excited the curioſity of Madame?"

"The ſcreech-owl might again have found his way into one of thoſe apartments;" and thus, to the apprehenſion of Iſabelle, the myſtery ſeemed perfectly elucidated, and Eglantine felt more than half inclined to adopt her friend's perſuaſion. She propoſed to the Counteſs to remove, under pretence of being diſturbed by the wind, to a chamber adjoining her own, and to have a bed put in an inſide room for her woman. The Counteſs, wiſhing equally to avoid exciting the ſuſpicions, or incurring the diſpleaſure of the Baron and the Lady Geneviora, readily adopted this project; and the following night, and ſome ſucceeding ones, paſſed without any diſturbance.

CHAP.

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CHAP. VIII.

"La qual mi vinſe ciaſcun ſentimento,
"E caddi come l'uom cui ſonno piglia."

DANTE.

SOME mornings afterwards, when the company aſſembled at breakfaſt, they could not avoid obſerving that the Count, who had been more than uſually vivacious on the preceding evening, ſeemed abſorbed in meditation, apparently of a gloomy nature. Eglantine rallied him on his ſerioufneſs, and

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he replied, with a forced ſmile, that he was ſubject at intervals to hypochondriac affections, and had been all night unmercifully oppreſſed by the nightmare. The Counteſs and Eglantine regarded each other:—both fancied that the anſwer was evaſive; and when alone, Madame expreſſed a belief that the ſame apparition which had terrified her, had preſented itſelf to the Count, though, having always ſtrongly ridiculed a faith in ſupernatural appearances, his pride would not allow him to retract his former opinions.

Towards night the ſpirits of the Count roſe, owing, perhaps, to the copious libations of Burgundy with which he ſeemed determined to exhilarate them. But on the following morning he appeared ſtill more diſturbed, and, uttering ſome embarraſſed apologies to the Baron and the Lady Geneviora, declared himſelf under a neceſſity of immediately departing, and aſſigned as his motive, a letter he had received, informing him of the coming of a perſon with

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with whom he had buſineſs of the laſt conſequence to tranſact. The Counteſs, though ſhe knew no ſuch perſon was expected, readily ſeconded his plan, and overruled the hoſpitable objections made by the Baron to their departure; for whilſt the Lady Geneviora continued in quiet poſſeſſion of her roſary, and her favourite Ignatius, ſhe was eaſily conſoled for the loſs of other ſociety. Ignatius gratefully returned the partiality ſhewn him by this Lady and the Baron, and ſpent at Berezule every hour he could ſpare from his monaſtic duties—duties of which he was not much inclined to make himſelf the ſlave; and as he ſtood high in the favour of the Abbot, he was, in a great meaſure, maſter of his own time.

The Counteſs inſiſted on the performance of Eglantine's promiſe to accompany her to the Chateau des Rochers (for ſo was her reſidence called). This deſire was readily

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complied with, and in two hours the party quitted Berezule.

The ſpirits of the Count ſeemed lightened when he reached his home, and he evidently exerted them to render it agreeable to Eglantine; but the Counteſs ſaw, or imagined ſhe ſaw, that his vivacity was forced.

Sitting at night, after ſupper, with Madame and Eglantine, he ſaid to the latter, with a ſarcaſtic ſmile, that he ſuppoſed the Counteſs had made her the confidant of the adventure of the haunted chamber. Eglantine was ſilent.

"What is your opinion on this ſubject?" ſaid the Count, fixing his eyes earneſtly on her.

"I am ſometimes at a loſs," replied Eglantine, "to determine what opinion I ought to form. I am convinced our powers of ſelf-deluſion are in this inſtance wondrous."

"Wondrous indeed, as when Madame miſtook the old Grecian figure in the tapeſtry

tapeſtry for the apparition of the deceaſed Marquis!"

"And who will anſwer," ſaid the Counteſs, with a ſcrutinizing look, "that Monſieur has not fallen into a ſimilar error?"

"Ridiculous!" ſaid the Count, with an affected laugh; "do you imagine I could be ſo weak as to catch the ſilly infection—to be ſcared by tales of ghoſts and goblins!—No, I leave the females of my family in quiet poſſeſſion of this abſurdity."

"Yet the belief of apparitions is not peculiar to women. If it be erroneous, ſome of the wiſeſt of your own ſex have maintained the opinion."

"True; and I might myſelf give credit to their appearance, were the errands they are ſaid to come on, of dignity proportionate to a phœnomenon ſo awful."

"And what more awful circumſtance could authorize ſuch a miracle than that which recently occurred at Berezule?"

"I perceive your inference, and acknowledge its juſtice; but if indeed the ſoul of the murdered Marquis——"

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"Heaven reſt it!" ſaid the Counteſs with ſolemnity.

"Amen!" ſighed Eglantine.

"I knew, and wiſhed him well," reſumed the Count; "but if indeed his ſpirit returns to call for vengeance on his murderers, why not addreſs the ſolemn appeal to thoſe whoſe office it is to bring them to puniſhment—why not favour them with ſuch communications as might enable them to diſcover the iniquity which has hitherto concealed itſelf in inſcrutable obſcurity? Can I believe that the departed ſoul ſhall be ſuffered to repaſs the awful barrier which ſeparates the viſible and inviſible worlds, for the inadequate and fantaſtic purpoſe of working on the terrors of the weak and the ignorant? Or can I ſuppoſe that the ſubtile ſpirit, after its releaſe from its material frame, can feel any peculiar attachment to the ſpot where ſlumber the mouldering relics of its corporeal companion?—Fancy alone has peopled vaults and charnel-grounds with forms of viſionary horror: were the ſoul, on momento us emergencies, permitted

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to return, its visitations would be to the living, not to the dead."

"These arguments are certainly plausible," said the Countess, "but——"

"Plausible!" interrupted the Count, "they are certain—founded in reason—in the nature of the circumstances. Had I myself beheld the apparition of the Marquis, if it came not to point out some efficient means for the manifestation of the concealed iniquity, I should the next hour be persuaded that the vision was either the coinage of my own distorted fancy, or impute it to the agency of some malignant spirits who might be suffered to inflict these visionary torments for the punishment of our secret sins."

"You speak feelingly," said the Countess; "one would imagine you had yourself suffered those torments!"

"I only endeavour to combat your prejudices—to convince your reason that if the shade of the deceased Marquis did return to this earth, a more momentous concern would call it from the repose of the tomb than

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than that of vainly terrifying the imaginations of thoſe who had no ability to execute the dread commiſſion it would come to enjoin."

"Yet if I live, I ſaw it!"

"Yes, the figure in the tapeſtry," ſaid the Count, ſmiling, as he roſe to ring for lights; but he continued,—"The world is full of myſtery: much has been elucidated by the new radiance which the riſing ſpirit of philoſophy has poured on the darkneſs of the human mind; but more ſtill bids defiance to its ſearching beam. What are we to think of the wondrous command which men, verſed in the occult ſciences, are ſaid to have acquired over nature? Many are reported to poſſeſs the aſtoniſhing faculty of tranſmuting the vileſt metals into precious ore. We have heard of the ſupernatural powers attributed to thoſe who call themſelves the Illuminati! What is this magic by which they are ſaid to preſent ſuch aſtoniſhing deceptions to the ſenſes? The more the mind involves itſelf in theſe perplexing ſubjects,

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ſubjects, the more it finds itſelf entangled in confuſion and doubt."

They ſeparated, for the night was far advanced."

CHAP. IX.

"Devoting all
"To love, each was to each a dearer ſelf."

THOMSON.

EGLANTINE reflected on this converſation of the Count, which was calculated rather to diſſipate than to confirm the idea that the Counteſs and ſhe had conceived, that the Count had been driven from Berezule by ſome ſupernatural occurrence; and it excited new doubts whether the evidence which could be collected in reſpect to the viſitations

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viſitations of any ſupernatural being, were, on calm inveſtigation, entitled to credit. On her return to Berezule ſhe determined, if poſſible, to diveſt herſelf of her fears, and give to this intereſting ſubject ſuch calm and candid examination as might aſcertain the degree of credibility which ought to be allowed to it. She had deſired Iſabelle, whom ſhe had left at Berezule, to acquaint her with any remarkable circumſtance which might occur during her abſence.

Eglantine found much amuſement in the ſociety of the Count and Counteſs. Their repreſentations of the great world in which they had lived, engaged her fancy, whilſt it aſtoniſhed her inexperience. The anecdotes which portrayed its morals and manners, though related with faſcinating vivacity, often ſhocked and aſtoniſhed her; and the *ſang froid* with which they were repeated, was highly revolting to her feelings: for, new to the world, and hitherto excluded from its buſy ſcenes, ſhe did not conceive, and

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and consequently could not allow for the wonderful influence of habit in reconciling the mind to objects and circumstances utterly incompatible with her unperverted sense of rectitude. Nor could she imagine that, by any revolution of years, or change of situation, she could ever contract a taste for that fashionable world, whose dissipation excited her contempt, and whose profligacy provoked her indignation. Then she reflected with secret joy and exultation on the character of him, to whom her auspicious destiny seemed on the point of uniting her; for whatever intervening care might casually possess her mind, this loved idea soon dissipated every other, and preserved its unabated ascendency. As the miser counts his hoarded riches in secret and solitary satisfaction, in the retirement of her heart Eglantine guarded the image of De Courcy, and her thoughts incessantly returned to hover with tender solicitude round their dearest treasure. Fancy adorned it with the brightest attributes—love, faith, and honour; expectation

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tion dwelt with laviſh fondneſs on the fair idea, and with ardent anticipation counted the weeks, the days, nay, even the hours which might yet intercept the promiſed felicity.—Oh happy faculty of the human mind! Is it to recompenſe us for thoſe real forms of calamity deſtined to purſue us through this dreary ſcene of ſin and ſorrow, that a pitying Providence ſends theſe fair forms of viſionary joy to throw a veil of ſplendid deluſion over the ghaſtly group of miſeries which hover in the rear—thoſe fatal images of future evil which, but for the merciful concealment that ſhrouds their impending horrors, would blaſt each intervening moment of felicity, and drive the ſoul to dreadful deſperation?

When Eglantine had been about a week at the Chateau des Rochers, the Baron unexpectedly arrived, and brought with him De Courcy. Eglantine received him not with ſmiles, but with tears; and the manly ſoul of De Courcy would have diſſolved in mutual

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mutual ſoftneſs, had not his pride reſtrained the drops which trembled on his eyelids. How pure, how rapturous were the ſenſations of this young and lovely pair when freed from the obſervation of every ſcrutinizing eye! They dared in congenial confidence to avow an affection firſt inſpired by the holy ſympathy of mutual worth, and now ſanctified by virtue, and approved by duty.

Human life has been compared to an arid deſert, interſperſed at intervals with meads of refreſhing verdure, with ſilver ſtreams, and groves of luxuriant foliage, whoſe melodious tenants faſcinate the ear with ſongs of ſiren ſweetneſs. Such was the elyſian ſcene that ſurrounded theſe thoughtleſs and happy lovers:—no fear of future evil damped the exquiſite enjoyment of the preſent—no gloomy preſcience ſuggeſted to their enraptured minds that ſuch ſuperior felicity was but partially diſpenſed—that much of the burning deſert yet remained untrodden!

One

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One of the Baron's ſervants had delivered Eglantine a letter from Iſabelle, but, engroſſed by other ſolicitudes, ſhe forgot to open it till ſhe retired for the night.

"The Marquis will reach you ſooner than this letter. Oh, how I rejoice in your felicity, my dear Mademoiſelle!—and you too will ſhare in mine; for Godfrey arrived here laſt night with his Lord, and, if I am to believe his profeſſions, as conſtant as ever. I ſhould be too happy but for one ſtrange circumſtance.

"The Marquis arrived late, and unexpectedly. The apartments, lately occupied by the Count and Counteſs, were luckily not prepared for his reception; he was therefore lodged in the ſouth gallery. The family retired betimes to reſt; for to ſome of the family reſt was allowed, though not to me, and to others. I am now, my dear Mademoiſelle, perfectly convinced that the ſtrange and

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and alarming noiſes we have heard, cannot be accidental, as I have wiſhed, and endeavoured to perſuade myſelf. If thoſe apartments are haunted by ſome inhabitant of another world, one would imagine that the arrival of the Marquis had excited in this diſturbed ſpirit ſome new and terrible perturbation. I am perplexed and confounded, and know not what to think!

" Godfrey laughs at what he terms our ſilly credulity. He inſiſts that theſe diſturbances originate in human contrivance, and declares his reſolution of paſſing a night in the haunted chambers, where, provided with a good caſe of piſtols, he will give the ghoſts a warm reception if they approach him. But I will exert my influence to divert him from this raſh purpoſe.

" The noiſes were ſo loud as to alarm the Baron and the Lady Geneviora, who, ſuppoſing them to be made by the domeſtics, Dame Maudlin was ſeverely chidden for not maintaining a ſtricter diſcipline. The upper ſervants have held a conſultation whether to reveal

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reveal to the Baron and the Lady Geneviora the true cauſe of their alarm. I have adviſed them to apply for advice to Father Ignatius, and to be entirely governed by his counſel; certain that whatever he directs will, in the end, be approved by our Lord and Lady.

"Adieu, my dear Mademoiſelle! Though I wiſh much for your return, I know you are happier where you are.

"Your faithful

"ISABELLE."

As Eglantine knew the Counteſs was not yet undreſſed, ſhe went to her apartment to communicate the contents of this letter. After ſome converſation on the ſubject, they concluded it would be uſeleſs to mention them to the Marquis, as, if they did not excite his deriſion, they would call up horrible and gloomy imaginations in his mind: and if an eclairciſſement ſhould at length become neceſſary, Eglantine thought it wiſer

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wiſer to commit it to the prudence of the Baron, and the addreſs of Ignatius. This reſolution formed, Eglantine opened her ſoul to thoſe delightful ſentiments of mutual tenderneſs which now poſſeſſed it with abſolute dominion.

CHAP. X.

THE Count and Counteſs confined the diſcontent excited by their altered circumſtances to their own boſoms; and fearful of being abandoned to the ſolitary deſertion of their own chateau, uſed their utmoſt exertions to render it agreeable to their young friends, who, happy in themſelves, and delighted with the

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the ſocial eaſe which prevailed in the manſion of the Count, and the feſtive ſpirit of his converſation, found the Chateau des Rochers a much more pleaſant reſidence than the gravity of the Baron and the ſolemn bigotry of the Lady Geneviora allowed Berezule to be.

The polite manners and winning addreſs of the Monk Ignatius, had extremely captivated the Count and Counteſs. The latter had conſtituted him her Confeſſor; the former, though he valued himſelf on being *un eſprit fort*, and conſequently derided what he termed the ſuperſtitious mummeries of the Romiſh Church, was pleaſed that Ignatius ſhould aſſume a character which would often procure to himſelf the pleaſure of his ſociety.

The Marquis and Eglantine, through reſpect to the memory of his deceaſed brother, determined to defer their union till a year ſhould have elapſed from the time of his

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his death. The Marquis, after remaining a few weeks in Gaſcony, purpoſed to return to Paris, where buſineſs of conſequence required his perſonal attendance.

The Baron, whoſe health was declining faſt, was adviſed by his phyſician to try the waters of Barege in the enſuing ſpring, which was now advancing. Thither Eglantine purpoſed to accompany him, and there the Marquis was to meet them. The Count and Counteſs alſo conſented to be of the party; and many delightful excurſions were planned to the ſublime and beautiful ſcenes which ſurround thoſe well-known ſprings emboſomed in Alpine ſolitudes. Thus, in ſupreme felicity, glided away the hours of the happy lovers, till propriety ſuggeſted to the Marquis the neceſſity of his returning to paſs ſome time with the Baron previous to his departure.

Whilſt, in compliance with the earneſt ſolicitations of the Count and Counteſs,

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the Marquis and Eglantine loitered yet a few days at le Chateau des Rochers, they were visited one morning by Ignatius. Eglantine, who was alone when he entered, seized the opportunity of questioning him in respect to the disturbances reported by Isabelle in her letter. Eglantine observed that his manner of speaking on this subject was much altered; he now appeared to treat it with serious attention, and mention it with solemn reverence. He confessed, though with apparent reluctance, that he had himself heard noises unaccountable to his comprehension, though he could not yet admit them to be supernatural. He said that, in compliance with the repeated prayers of the household, who were continually reproached by the Lady Geneviora with their wanton midnight revelry, to which she naturally imputed the sounds which broke her slumbers, he had been obliged to inform her Ladyship and the Baron of the cause to which they were attributed by the domestics. He said they had both been much astonished

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niſhed and ſhocked by this intelligence, particularly the lady, on whoſe nervous ſyſtem it ſeemed to produce a powerful effect. The ſame queſtion, he added, had preſented itſelf to the mind of the Baron, which is naturally ſuggeſted by every other—Why, if the ſpirit of the murdered Marquis were allowed to call for vengeance on his betrayers, was not the awful revelation made to the young De Courcy?—A young ſecretary belonging to the Marquis," continued Ignatius, "determined to develop this gloomy myſtery, but he has had reaſon to repent his temerity."

Here the converſation was interrupted by the entrance of the Count and Counteſs; and, greatly as it had excited Eglantine's curioſity, ſhe had no opportunity of renewing it, as Ignatius departed in a few hours.

The next day was appointed for the return of the Marquis and Eglantine to Berezule; and though much diſturbed by the confirma-

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tion of intelligence so painful to her feelings, she endeavoured to conceal them with affected gaiety, and forbore to mention to De Courcy the cause of her secret depression.

On the following day Eglantine and the Marquis arrived at Berezule, where, notwithstanding the tenderness with which they were received, the Marquis was forcibly struck with the unusual gloom that clouded an interview in which social pleasure would have been naturally expected to predominate.

Eglantine retired to her apartment to change her dress, and took the opportunity of speaking to Isabelle, of whose pale looks she earnestly enquired the cause.

"I have suffered much since we parted," said Isabelle, "but I thought there was no use in interrupting the happiness you enjoyed, and therefore refrained from writing to you."

"Ignatius hinted to me that Godfrey——"

Oh

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"Oh yes, yes! it is indeed moſt ſtrange and ſhocking!——But the bell rings for dinner—we have now no time to ſpeak of theſe matters—at night, when you retire, I will tell you all; or rather, if you permit me, I will bring Godfrey to your dreſſing-room—he will relate the circumſtances much better than I ſhould do; beſides, I ſhould wiſh you to ſee and ſpeak to the young man to whom I have promiſed to vow obedience."

"And on this account, too, I ſhould like to converſe with Godfrey;—let him come to my dreſſing-room exactly at twelve."

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CHAP. XI.

"There is no people, learned or unlearned, amongſt whom "apparitions of the dead are not related and believed. This "opinion, which perhaps prevails as far as human nature is "diffuſed, could become univerſal only by its truth. That "it is doubted by ſingle cavillers, can very little weaken the "genuine evidence; and ſome who deny it with their tongues, "confeſs it by their fears."

RASSELAS.

AT dinner Eglantine had the ſatisfaction of meeting her revered preceptor, Father Francis. Ignatius and Hugo were alſo preſent; for ſince the late nocturnal diſturbances, the Lady Geneviora never thought herſelf in ſafety unleſs ſurrounded by a little phalanx of holy men.

The

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The gravity of the Baron and the Lady Geneviora ſeemed to increaſe. Ignatius too was unuſually ſilent. At dinner time Hugo never allowed himſelf leiſure to ſpeak. The ſpirits of De Courcy and Eglantine were depreſſed by the ſerioufneſs of their companions, and Francis alone retained his wonted cheerfulneſs.

After dinner the company retired to an adjoining drawing-room. The dimneſs of the fading light ſeemed to augment their ſolemnity; they ſunk by degrees into total ſilence. Eglantine ſighed:—her ſigh was echoed by the Baron.

"What does this mean," ſaid the Marquis, ſuddenly awaking from his reverie, "what bodes this depreſſion which ſeems to overpower us, and of which I feel the influence, without knowing to what cauſe to attribute it? Is it that it is not permitted to the human mind to be too happy—that Nature of herſelf will turn the balance—and

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when the light ſpirits, animated by joy, riſe to ethereal exhilaration, throw into the ſcale ſome counterpoiſe of infelicity to repreſs their fond aſpirings, and recal them to earth?".

" Few," ſaid the Baron, " are permitted to drink the cup of human joy unalloyed by many drops of bitterneſs."

" But thoſe drops of bitterneſs when we have drained them, enhance the flavour of the ſparkling nectar."

" True, but the phial of wrath is inexhauſtible. Who that exiſts can boaſt of having drained its laſt fatal dregs? The tomb is the only ſafe aſylum from the perſecutions of calamity!"

" Your words contain ſome latent meaning—they bode ſome unforeſeen misfortune! Yet what have I to dread? Are you not ſafe, my friends? Have I not the happy conſciouſneſs of poſſeſſing all my ambition aſpires to—all my ſoul holds dear? Have you not, my Lord, received me as your ſon? Is not Eglantine mine?"

Eglantine

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Eglantine gave him her hand, whilſt ſhe turned away to conceal a ſtarting tear.

"Poſſeſſed of this treaſure," he reſumed, tenderly kiſſing it, "I feel prepared for whatever misfortune your foreboding words may allude to, and my ſpirit ſhall diſdain to ſink for a moment beneath the weight of it. Has the ſword of war deſolated my diſtant lands? has fire conſumed my ſubſtance?—or, have I been injured in a more vulnerable part—is my boſom again to be wounded through that of a friend?"

"No misfortune has befallen you—your lands, your poſſeſſions, and your friends are ſafe; yet there is a circumſtance which, though it may ultimately lead to a diſcovery, which——"

"The diſcovery of my brother's murderers? If chance, or rather Providence, has favoured you with any light which may lead to the development of that myſtery of guilt and horror, ſhall I not follow the dawning ray with more devotion than the

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proſtrate Perſian adores the riſing radiance of his God? Oh ſpeak—relieve my impatience!"

"As yet," ſaid the Baron, "all is perplexity and darkneſs; yet theſe may ſoon be diſſipated. What," he continued, raiſing his voice, and fixing his eyes on De Courcy, "what, if Providence, in compaſſion to the blindneſs of human reaſon, were to ſend from the tomb a ſupernatural agent to clear this dreadful myſtery, which its dim imperfect ray can never penetrate?"

"A ſupernatural agent ſent from the tomb—in other words, a ghoſt," ſaid De Courcy with much ſurpriſe, ſome contempt, and more diſappointment; "is this the light you promiſed me, my Lord?"

"Is it not the light from on high?"

"When it has been made manifeſt to my ſenſes, I ſhall believe, and acknowledge it to be ſo."

"That the ſpirits of the departed have, on great occaſions, been ſuffered to return to

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the ſcenes of their mortal exiſtence, you cannot doubt."

"Pardon me, my Lord; I have my doubts."

"The concurring teſtimonies of all ages and nations have ſanctioned this opinion: it has been diffuſed as widely as the bleſſings of light and air. Is this no evidence of its authenticity?"

"In my opinion none. The human mind is in all climes nearly ſimilar; to the diverſity of cultivation muſt be chiefly attributed the variety it exhibits:—ſuperſtition is one of its incidental, perhaps one of its conſtitutional, weakneſſes. Were the world ſtill unenlightened by the divine ſpirit of revealed religion, all its innumerable nations would ſtill continue to pay ridiculous adoration to miſhapen and fantaſtic idols. Would you, therefore, perſuade me that the general ſuffrage ſanctioned an idolatry always abſurd, and often ſanguinary; and that, becauſe univerſal, it muſt of neceſſity be right?"

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"The caſes are not ſimilar," ſaid Ignatius; "wide as the creation, is extended the conviction of the ſuperintendence of a Supreme Being, which the ſacred hand of Nature has impreſſed on the human mind. But the conceptions of ſavages muſt be groſs and ignorant; incapable of the refined abſtraction of a pure ſpiritual religion, they will naturally attach their reverence to material objects; and running wild in the mazes of an abſurd or a cruel enthuſiaſm, their blind devotion will produce thoſe deplorable effects on which the mild ſpirit of enlightened Chriſtianity looks down with mingled horror and compaſſion."

"It may reſerve thoſe feelings for the deviations of many of its own proſelytes. Have its own altars never been polluted by the blood of human ſacrifices?"

"The purity of the Catholic Faith muſt be preſerved," ſaid Hugo.

"So ſaid the Spaniards when they ſheathed their relentleſs ſwords in the hoſpitable boſoms of the guiltleſs Americans, and

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and ſo ſay the Judges of the Holy Office at this day, when they rack the inventive ingenuity of man to find tortures adequate to the guilt of differing from themſelves on ſome trifling point of ſpeculative doctrine."

"And they ſay very right," replied Hugo; "it is to be ſuppoſed that the Judges of the Holy Office underſtand thoſe intricate caſes of conſcience much better than any of the poor ignorant laity can be ſuppoſed to do."

De Courcy ſurveyed Hugo with a momentary ſmile of contempt.—"God forbid," ſaid he, again addreſſing Ignatius, "God forbid I ſhould impute to Chriſtianity the errors of her ſpurious offspring! Theſe only prove how dark is the ſuperſtition natural to perverted humanity, when it can even catch from her mild celeſtial radiance the fires in which it conſumes its bloody ſacrifices."

Father Francis ſighed heavily.

"A few ſuperior minds, directed in their reſearches

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reſearches for truth, more, perhaps, by the light of reaſon, than that of revelation, which, as we have ſeen, is an imperfect guide—have learned to conceive that no polluted incenſe can be acceptable to perfect purity, and, by a more juſt appretiation of the divine attributes, have learned to adore in ſpirit and in truth. But how few, comparatively, are theſe enlightened mortals?—Are not the bulk of mankind, from the burning Indus to the frozen Pole, ſtill ſunk in barbarous ſuperſtition? I return to my argument: does the univerſality of error change its nature?—Becauſe ſuperſtition is general, muſt it be right?"

"Recal your imagination from theſe erratic excurſions," ſaid Ignatius, "and let us return to the point from whence we firſt ſet out. The generally received opinions of mankind are, for the moſt part, right; they are handed down to us, impreſſed with the ſtamp of a revered authority; and it appears preſumptuous, if not impious, to deny our aſſent to them."

"In

" In many inſtances I fear I ſhould be thought that preſumptuous and impious being; but it is now my turn to liſten."

" The return of departed ſpirits," reſumed the Monk, " ſeems authenticated by ſcriptural authority."

" To ſuch ſacred authority I ſhall only object, that the age of miracles is paſt. Our Monarch, when he leads forth his victorious armies to the field, will not ſuppoſe that the ſun ſhould ſtand ſtill in honour of his triumphs; neither will our Sovereign Pontiff expect thoſe divine communications with which the legiſlator of the Jews was favoured; nor our modern apoſtles, however ſanctified, aſpire to the holy privilege of caſting out devils, or healing diſeaſes."

" You will not deny," ſaid the Baron, " that Providence may yet work a miracle for the detection of atrocious guilt?"

" But where is the expediency of ſuch a miracle, when Providence might produce the ſame end by the operation of natural and

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and common cauſes? What guilty deed can be wrapped in darkneſs ſo deep and total as utterly to exclude every dawn of light?—and even when the concealed iniquity ſeems to bid defiance to human penetration, how frequently does the horror-ſtruck criminal, unable to endure the torments of the hell within, become the voluntary accuſer of his own crime, and ſhed the expiatory ſacrifice of his blood on the altar of offended Juſtice?"

"I ſtill maintain," ſaid the Baron, "that the diſſenting voices and ſpecious arguments of a few opponents will not overrule the authority of a generally received opinion."

"Certainly not: neither will the piercing rays of the ſun enlighten the viſion of the man who voluntarily cloſes his eyes againſt them. Father Ignatius juſtly imputes the ſuperſtitious idolatries of the heathen world to the inſtinctive belief of a Supreme Being. A faith in ſpectres I would derive from a ſimilar intuitive perſuaſion of the immortality of the ſoul. The unenlightened mind, though convinced that the ſoul ſurvives the

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ſtroke which lays its corporeal partner in the duſt, unable to conceive that it can be utterly purified from each terreſtial inſtinct, through the medium of a heated imagination, ſees it ſtill hovering around the ſcenes which once were dear to it, or mourning over the mouldering remains of the companion from which it ſo reluctantly ſeparated.—— But whilſt engaged in this argument, I forgot to enquire into the motives which gave riſe to it. They muſt, I ſuppoſe, be of ſerious weight, or they could not have enforced the faith you ſeem inclined to allow to them."

"You give me little encouragement," ſaid the Baron, "to narrate the circumſtances which I confeſs have ſtrongly affected my mind; though on your's, I ſuppoſe, they will produce no effect but that of exciting the ſpirit of irony."

"No," ſaid De Courcy; "I am really anxious to learn the circumſtances you allude to, and will liſten to them with ſerious attention."

CHAP.

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CHAP. XII.

THE Baron then ſtated to the Marquis all the circumſtances he had collected relative to the cauſe of his preſent inquietude; but in this narration Eglantine learned little that was new to her, as Godfrey would not conſent to have a ſtrange adventure, which had occurred to him, made known to the Baron without the acquieſcence of the Marquis, to whom it was ſtill equally a ſecret.

When the Baron concluded, De Courcy ſat ſilent, as if in rumination of the circumſtances

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ſtances he had heard; but his countenance expreſſed no paſſion except wonder and curioſity.

"Methinks," ſaid he, "this myſtery may be ſoon unravelled. I will this night, occupy the apartment, for which the ſpirit of my brother is thought to retain ſo peculiar a partiality. Though, if allowed to return for the purpoſe of ſuch communication as you ſuppoſe, might I not as well have been favoured with it in Paris, or in any other place? I cannot conceive what local attachment—what myſterious bond can unite the ſoul, if it does return to thoſe places where the decaying veſtiges of its mortal frame have mouldered in rottenneſs and corruption. Is this the knowledge which is concealed from the learned and prudent, and revealed to babes? for with the underſtandings of babes and their ancient nurſes ſuch ideas ſeem perfectly congenial."

"Again at your irony!" ſaid the Baron.

"Forgive me: I have done with levity on

on a ſubject which, in whatever light it may appear to my reaſon, is calculated to call up ſolemn and melancholy ideas in my ſoul; to remind me of the duty I have ſo vainly endeavoured to fulfil, and to repreſs and reprove the too exulting ſentiments of felicity which have been ſuffered to poſſeſs my boſom whilſt the *manes* of a beloved and honoured brother yet remain unappeaſed!"

"My ſentiments reſpecting this ſubject," ſaid Ignatius, "were once exactly ſimilar to thoſe of the Marquis; and I ſtill think with him, that it will ſcarcely ſtand the teſt of rational and impartial inveſtigation. Yet there are phœnomena in nature which, though impoſſible to be accounted for, it is yet more impoſſible to deny. The phyſical world is ſtill wrapped in myſtery inexplicable to the weakneſs of finite comprehenſion: ſhall its bold conjectures then preſume to pierce the veil, and unfold the miracles of an inviſible and interdicted ſtate?"

"As we all believe in a ſtate of future retribution," ſaid the Baron, "and that moſt

moſt of us are ſufficiently enlightened to explode from our creed thoſe notions of puniſhment which have originated in a too literal interpretation of the Scriptures, and know that to ſpiritual beings ſpiritual puniſhments can alone be allotted—what is there irrational in the ſuppoſition that the vicious ſoul, when releaſed from its human captivity, inſtead of being condemned to ſwim in ſeas of fire and ſulphur, ſhould be delivered over to the torments of its own remorſe—to the venomed ſtings of the worm which never dies—that it ſhould be doomed to wander with the inceſſant perturbation, the deſolated wildneſs of deſpair, through the ſcenes which once witneſſed its ſenſuality, or were polluted by its guilt?"

"Nor need it revolt our rationality," added Ignatius, "to believe that ſuch beings may be ſometimes permitted to become viſible to the eyes of the former aſſociates of their crimes, to awaken with ſolemn admonition their ſleeping conſciences from the trance of guilt—to warn the innocent

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cent of meditated injury, or to drag forth to public infamy, and exemplary punishment the crimes which, involved in the black intricacies of refined subtilty, lie impervious to the ken of human penetration."

"On these speculative points," said Father Francis, "every man is undoubtedly at liberty to form his own judgment, and the investigation of them may be of no real consequence to mankind: only, methinks, it were better to discountenance opinions on which superstition has already erected a superstructure at once so gloomy and so ludicrous. But," he continued, looking towards the casement, "the moon is now risen; I must return to the Convent."

"Surely, Father," said Eglantine, with a look of apprehension, "you will not think of traversing the wilds of that frightful forest by yourself?"

"Why not, my child? Those who fear not spectres, seldom see them. I am of the number of those who entertain no apprehensions of those visionary beings. How slight

is

is the link which connects me to my preſent ſtate of exiſtence! I conſider myſelf as ſtanding perpetually on the verge of the inviſible world, and I feel no reluctance to the idea of holding converſe with my future ſpiritual aſſociates. How beautifully the moon riſes from behind that wooded cliff!" continued the Monk; "with that ſilver lamp to guide my footſteps, and this," graſping his ſtaff, "to ſupport them, what have I to fear?"

"Oh Father, nothing!" ſaid Eglantine: "a ſoul ſo purified from every earthly ſtain, has in itſelf a more bright illumination than that which now pours its ſtreams of ſilver radiance from the eaſt!"

"This is enthuſiaſm," ſaid the Monk; "and enthuſiaſm is no leſs dangerous than ſuperſtition—it is indeed its parent."

As Eglantine attended him to the door, he turned, and uttered a ſhort but fervent prayer for her.

"My

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"My child," ſaid he in a low voice, "preſerve, if poſſible, the compoſure of your mind. Let not your reaſon be impoſed on by falſe appearances, nor your ſpirit depreſſed by ſuperſtitious fears. Above all, place your affiance in the paternal protection of your Heavenly Guardian, and depend on the unalienable attachment of a friend who, with ceaſeleſs vigilance, will endeavour to protect your innocence and peace."

CHAP.

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CHAP. XIII.

" Palida, esangue, e sbigottita in atto
" Lo spavento e'l dolor l'avea ritratto."

TASSO.

" NOT afraid of ghosts!" said Hugo, looking after the Monk with an air of infinite contempt, " I wish a parcel of them would waylay him in the forest, and maul him as unmercifully as they did a grandmother's uncle's son of mine, to punish him for his infidelity and new-fashioned principles!"

The Lady Geneviora eagerly enquired

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into the circumſtances alluded to by the Prieſt, and was regaled with a tale of ſuch ſingular abſurdity as might have been expected from the character of the relator. Her Ladyſhip produced another which nearly emulated its folly and improbability.

One tale recalled another to recollection. The Baron repeated ſeveral, abounding in various circumſtances of horror, and authenticated by the teſtimony of witneſſes the moſt reſpectable; whilſt the moon, now riſen far above the horizon, and half obſcured by clouds, threw her languid luſtre full on the caſements of the ſaloon, which were often ſhaken by the faint blaſt that ſwept the naked branches of the foreſt. At the concluſion of every tale our little circle drew cloſer round the glowing embers of a great wood fire, and De Courcy preſſed nearer to the ſide of his Eglantine.

" In the generality of theſe tales," ſaid Ignatius, " the viſitations of departed ſpirits are

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are assigned to causes so frivolous and inadequate, that it is not wonderful they should provoke the scoff of incredulity. Disgusted with the ridiculous extravagance of the stories which are generally believed and circulated amongst the vulgar, I was not long since of the number of those who deride the supposed existence of such visionary visitants; but a solemn circumstance which fell under my own immediate observation, and in which, though not a principal, I was obliged to take an active part, struck my mind with a kind of remorse for its former infidelity, and enforced conviction of that mysterious agency which no finite intelligence can fully comprehend."

The little circle turned their eyes on Ignatius with eager curiosity as he thus proceeded:—

"I was some years since commissioned by the Convent to which I belonged at Bologna, to go to Genoa for the purpose of collecting

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ſome valuable effects that had been bequeathed to our Society by a Jew, who, ſoftened by divine grace, had become the proſelyte of one of our order.

" A few days previous to that which was fixed for my departure, I received a letter from a lady, with whoſe family I had been intimately and long acquainted, entreating me to viſit her immediately. I was not negligent in obeying the ſummons, and deſired the bearer of the billet to conduct me to the reſidence of his Lady. I was much ſurpriſed to find Signora Hortenſia Martini, the deſcendant of a noble family, whom I had once been accuſtomed to behold encircled with all the voluptuous luxury of wealth and pride, now the obſcure inhabitant of a little mean manſion ſituated in the moſt deſerted ſuburbs of the city. I knew ſhe had diſgraced and offended her family by an union with a young merchant, who, in every inſtance, independent of his birth and his profeſſion, was worthy the preference ſhe beſtowed on him; but as he was opulent, this

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this circumſtance did not account for her altered fortunes. She read in my countenance the ſentiments of compaſſion ſo ſad a change excited.

'Yes, Father,' ſaid ſhe, 'I have indeed ſuffered a ſevere reverſe of fortune, but think not the tears I ſhed flow from any regret of an opulence, of which, on account of theſe little ones alone, I lament the deprivation!'

"She pointed as ſhe ſpoke to three lovely children, who fondly clung around her, and, with the engaging endearments of infantine tenderneſs, ſtrove to mitigate her diſtreſs.

'You know,' reſumed Hortenſia, 'how greatly my union with Anſelmo Dalmonte—an union in which I conſulted the ſimple dictates of nature and affection, irritated the ſelfiſh pride of my family. The hatred of my reſentful and arrogant brothers purſued my huſband with unrelenting bitterneſs. I often feared it would bring him to an untimely

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grave; and whatever commercial advantages his reſidence in this city might afford him, I beſought him with tears to ſacrifice them to my peace, and to quit a country, where the anxiety of my fears, though their ſuggeſtions might be chimerical, ſuffered me not to enjoy one moment's tranquillity.

'My huſband, though uninfluenced by the fears which inceſſantly preyed on my ſpirits, indulgent even to my weakneſs, yielded, though reluctantly, to my wiſhes. In the deſign of ſeeking with his family that peace in ſome diſtant province, which the reſentment of my relations, or rather, perhaps, my own unhappy infirmity, forbade him to enjoy in his native city, he determined to remove to Genoa, where he hoped to eſtabliſh himſelf in an advantageous line of commerce. Commerce he loved; and the liberal expanſion of his mind taught him to conſider it as more truly honourable than that indolent apathy of misjudging pride, which degrades the character it is intended to ennoble.

'Having

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'Having converted almoſt all his effects to money, and provided himſelf with bills of exchange, he quitted me with a thouſand endearing profeſſions of eternal remembrance, and promiſes of ſending for me and theſe dear infants, whom he bathed in tears of paternal regret, as ſoon as he ſhould have time to prepare for our reception. That laſt interview ſeemed clouded with a preſentiment of ſomething dreadful; but when I reflected that it was in compliance with my own wiſhes this journey was undertaken, I felt my oppoſition would come too late, and ſuffered him to depart. I conſented to a ſeparation which was doomed to be eternal! Oh Father!' continued Hortenſia, burſting into a violent paſſion of tears, 'Dalmonte is dead!—he has been murdered, and whether he has fallen a victim to the avarice of ſtrangers, or to the treachery of relation——Oh, the idea is too horrible!'

'But on what reaſon, my daughter,' ſaid I, 'do you found this terrible ſuppoſition?'

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'Alas!' replied Hortenſia, 'I know too well the faithful heart of my Anſelmo, to believe that, if in being, he would have ceaſed to live for me and for his children! On his journey he wrote to me from every ſtage: on his arrival at Genoa he wrote;—here,' ſhe continued, taking a paper from her boſom, 'here is the laſt ſad proof of my Anſelmo's affection!'

THE LETTER.

"Though almoſt ſinking under fatigue, and ſurrounded with the diſagreeable buſtle of an inn, I ſnatch a moment to inform my ever dear Hortenſia of my ſafe arrival at Genoa. May this city be more propitious to our happineſs than our native Bologna has been!—At preſent unconnected with it by any intereſting tie of friendſhip, or bond of conſanguinity, it ſeems to me more dreary than a wilderneſs; but I have been ſo

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ſo fortunate as already to find an acquaintance, to whoſe houſe I am preparing to remove: there I hope to feel more at eaſe, and to be able to ſhake off this uncomfortable gloom which ſo heavily oppreſſes my ſpirits; yet, I feel it will never be entirely diſſipated till I embrace my Hortenſia and our lovely infants. Adieu! I commit you to the protection of the Almighty and his holy angels!

"ANSELMO DALMONTE.

"I have been obliged to leave my faithful Paulo, who has been ſeized with an ague, at a village forty leagues from hence; but I hope he will be able to follow me with my baggage in a few days."

'This letter,' reſumed Hortenſia, 'is the laſt I have received from Anſelmo; nor have I ever afterwards heard the ſlighteſt information reſpecting his deſtiny. In a

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week from the date of this letter, I received another from Paulo, that old and faithful domeſtic, who, when ſufficiently recovered, had followed his maſter to Genoa, with the baggage left in his care. On his arrival in that city, he eaſily found the inn where Anſelmo had ſtopped; but the hoſt informed him that he had only remained there to take ſome refreſhment, and write a letter, and had immediately departed with a ſtranger of mean appearance, who carried for him a ſmall portmanteau, and with whom he had ſome converſation in Spaniſh—a language which the hoſt did not underſtand.

'Paulo, after continuing to make a moſt diligent but fruitleſs ſearch for his maſter for three days, applied to the magiſtracy. The innkeeper and his people were examined; but the fact, as he had already ſtated it, was corrobated by the teſtimonies of ſo many witneſſes, that his innocence admitted not of doubt. Paulo, wearied at length with his fruitleſs and hopeleſs reſearches, returned to

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me with the fatal intelligence. We knew that the ſmall portmanteau mentioned by the innkeeper, contained in caſh, jewels, and bills of exchange, almoſt all the property of my huſband. He had ſaid that he was on the point of removing to the houſe of an old acquaintance:—what room remained then to doubt that he had been deceived and decoyed by a ſpecious ſhew of friendſhip and hoſpitality, and, with the unſuſpicious confidence of friendſhip, had run with inadvertent ſtep into the deadly pitfal?—But by whom has it been dug? Has Dalmonte fallen the accidental prey of murderous avarice, or the predeſtined victim of implacable revenge? This horrible ſecret yet ſleeps in the darkneſs of futurity! Meantime, Oh Father! conceive, for I cannot deſcribe, my ſufferings—perſecuted by a family who, inſtead of conſoling my ſorrows, triumph with barbarous exultation in my misfortunes—abandoned by the former friends of my proſperity—ſtripped, by the unpitying creditors of my huſband, of the ſmall

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remaining property which he had not converted to money, and wasted by the sense of anguish which preys incessantly on my soul!—Yet a still deeper gulph of misery opens before me, and I anticipate with unspeakable horror the hour which shall witness the entire consumption of the slender pittance which yet remains unspent—when even this roof, mean as it is, will be no longer allowed to shelter my infant orphans!'

"I endeavoured," continued Ignatius, "to sooth this unfortunate widow, whom I knew to be sensible and pious; yet what motive of consolation could I urge in a situation so eminently deplorable? Every human comfort seemed precluded by the magnitude of her calamity, and no rhetoric of mine could suggest better than her own piety those motives of religious resignation which may soften, but cannot obliviate the sense of human anguish.

'I accidentally learned your intended journey

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journey to Genoa,' ſaid Hortenſia, 'and this circumſtance, trifling as it may appear, revives my extinguiſhed hopes. Men of your ſacred character have frequently opportunities of developing myſteries impenetrable to others. The horrors attendant on the awful criſis of approaching diſſolution have been often known to wring ſecrets of dreadful import from the hardened hearts of the moſt impenitent. The hand of Providence may guide you in your reſearches;—ſurely its awful counſels will be juſtified to mankind, and the murderers of my huſband brought to public and exemplary puniſhment!'—

"I ſolemnly promiſed the unhappy Hortenſia to exert my utmoſt diligence in endeavouring to diſcover the perpetrators of the crime ſhe had but too much reaſon to believe had been committed.

"A few days after this converſation I departed on my miſſion, and arrived in Genoa. Amongſt the perſons with whom, whilſt

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whilſt in that city, I became neceſſarily acquainted in the courſe of my tranſactions, was the Signor Carſini, a merchant of very conſiderable property and eminence. Having very ſufficiently enriched his family, it was now become his ambition to aggrandize it; and having beſtowed on his eldeſt ſon Alonzo a diſtinguiſhed education, he had ſent him into Tuſcany, of which country he was himſelf a native, to ſerve in the armies of the Grand Duke. Exactly at the period when I viſited Genoa, the young Alonzo alſo returned from Florence, impatient to embrace a family from which he had been ſeparated three years.

CHAP.

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CHAP. XIV.

"In age they differ, but they join in heart."

PARNELL.

"IT was my happineſs to be favoured with the partial eſteem of this reſpectable family; and the young Alonzo in particular treated me with a confidence and affection which, conſidering the diſparity of our years, and the diſſimilarity of our profeſſions and characters, ſeemed ſomewhat extraordinary. I paſſed all my leiſure hours in the houſe of Signor Carſini; and every interview increaſed the ſatisfaction which Alonzo evidently received from my converſation, whilſt the Signor was pleaſed with, and encouraged an intimacy, which he poſſibly imagined might

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might conduce to the improvement of his ſon, and prevent him from being led, by the diſſipation of idleneſs, to form connections of a more dangerous tendency.

" I was not unmindful of my promiſes to Hortenſia, and entreated my new friends to aſſiſt my enquiries, which they willingly acceded to; but it avails nothing to repeat exertions which produced not the ſlighteſt effect. Deſpairing of ſucceſs, I inſenſibly deſiſted from my efforts, when, by events the moſt extraordinary, the myſtery of iniquity was revealed, and the ſacred ways of Providence vindicated to the world.

" The young Alonzo and I frequently took long walks into the country. As we were returning to the city one evening later than uſual, we had ſcarcely reached the ſuburbs, when we were overtaken by a violent ſtorm of rain and thunder.

' Luckily,' ſaid Alonzo, ' we are near a place of refuge. I have an aunt who inhabits this quarter; her houſe is juſt by.'

' We

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" We ſoon reached a handſome building, and Alonzo introduced me to the lady and her family, with whoſe eaſy politeneſs I was much pleaſed.

" As the ſtorm continued with increaſing violence, Signora Perlotto, who was a widow, propoſed to us to paſs the night at her houſe, and offered to diſpatch a meſſenger to Signor Carſini, leſt the ſtorm and our abſence ſhould excite his apprehenſion.

' What,' replied the young ſoldier, laughing, ' would you wiſh my friend and me to expoſe ourſelves to the perils we may encounter in this manſion of your's, which fame reports to be moſt unmercifully haunted ?'

' My family and I,' replied the lady, ' have inhabited it for a year without receiving any perſonal injury.'

' That is to ſay,' returned Alonzo in the ſame tone, ' that the goblins who infeſt this houſe have not yet arrived at ſuch a pitch of inſolence as to pinch or buffet you.'

' There

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'There was a time,' returned the lady, with a ſerious ſmile, 'when I conſidered ſubjects of this nature in the ſame ludicrous light that you do, and treated them with the ſame levity.'

'But thoſe nocturnal gentry have convinced you of your error, and taught you to treat them with more conſideration.'

'Poſſibly they have.'

'I perceive,' returned A'onzo, 'you are rather reſerved on this ſubject, and I commend your circumſpection when I reflect that ſome of theſe inviſible ſprites may be eaveſdropping at this moment; and poſſibly revenge on you at night any expreſſions derogatory to their dignity which you may utter in the day.'

'I confeſs,' replied the lady, 'this is a ſubject which I do not like to hear lightly ſpoken of. I ſhall expoſe myſelf to your ridicule by acknowledging that the uncommon noiſes by which this houſe is diſturbed, have terrified me into a reſolution of quitting it; notwithſtanding my finding it in every other

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other inſtance extremely ſuitable and convenient. I will not repeat the tales related by my ſervants; we all know the magnifying, or rather creative powers of ignorance and ſuperſtition. I at firſt treated theſe ſtories with the contempt I ſuppoſed they merited; but when ſome of my ſervants were actually driven by terror from my dwelling, and that I found it almoſt impoſſible to ſupply their places with others, the fear of being left alone in this ſolitary houſe compelled me to give attention to a grievance, which, however ideal the cauſe in which it originated, was now become a matter of ſerious importance.

'I determined one night to watch with my family; and for this purpoſe, after having myſelf ſearched the houſe with the ſtricteſt exactneſs, and ſeen all the doors and windows barred, I collected every individual of my houſehold—even cats and dogs were admitted to the aſſembly, in the large chamber which opens to the long gallery at the top of the grand ſtaircaſe.

'At

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'At twelve we entered this apartment. Not a breath of air was heard; the moſt profound quiet for ſome time prevailed in the houſe;—this was nothing more than I expected, and my ſtrong inclination to ſleep was not baniſhed by any uneaſy apprehenſion. Inclined to indulge this propenſity, I was beginning to think of diſmiſſing my companions to their reſpective apartments, when my attention was arouſed by hearing the folding doors which are at the foot of the ſtaircaſe, diſtinctly opened, though I had myſelf carefully barred them, and ſome perſon aſcend the ſtairs with a light but ſlow ſtep.'

'And had none of your companions courage to open the door, and endeavour to detect the impoſtor?' ſaid Alonzo.

'We had no ſoldier amongſt us,' replied Signora Perlotto; 'we were, indeed, deprived of motion, and gazed on each other in ſpeechleſs aſtoniſhment, whilſt we heard the continuing footſteps paſs cloſe by the door, and reſound in echoes through the gallery,

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gallery, faint in proportion to their diſtance, till the door at the farther end of the gallery opened, and ſlowly cloſed again; when, as we ſuppoſed, the being, whether mortal or ſpiritual, had entered the chamber it belonged to. To add to my amazement, I had myſelf locked that door with the others in the ſame range, and the keys lay before me on the table.

'My children and domeſtics dropped on their knees, whilſt I continued in a kind of ſtupor, in which aſtoniſhment ſeemed more prevalent than terror. For half an hour an awful ſtillneſs reigned throughout the manſion, when the door of the chamber again opened and cloſed; we heard the ſounds of the approaching footſteps in the gallery; and I fancied I could even diſtinguiſh the flowing of ſilk robes, which ſeemed to ſweep the ſtairs as they deſcended. The door into the hall again opened and cloſed: afterwards all was quiet and ſilent as the grave.

'I ſay nothing,' added Signora Perlotto, 'of my own ſenſations; I have ſtated the fact

fact simply as it occurred, and leave you to make your own animadversions.'

'I confess it appears an extraordinary one,' said Alonzo; 'yet I cannot forbear suspecting it to originate in some conspiracy amongst your servants!'

'The same idea crossed my mind,' said the lady; 'but the wild horror exhibited in their countenances and gestures on the night I have described, would have sufficiently convinced me of their innocence, had I even had cause to suspect it. When this suspicion was rejected, another presented itself to my mind. I hold this house on very moderate terms; some interested and wicked person, who wished to obtain possession of it, by rendering my abode in it intolerable, might hope to induce me to part with it, which I shall certainly do at a considerable loss. Yet who, to obtain an end so inadequate, would recur to means not only incessantly toilsome, but certainly pregnant with danger?'

'As to danger,' replied the young soldier,

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dier, laughing, 'not much, I believe, is to be apprehended from the proweſs of the myrmidons by whom you are ſurrounded. But, my good aunt, what you have related has inſpired me with an inſurmountable inclination to eſſay this perilous adventure, and I am determined to ſleep this night (if permitted by this ſupernatural viſitant to ſleep) in that very chamber which he reſorts to at the end of the gallery.'

"Signora Perlotto turned pale at this determination, and warmly, but vainly oppoſed it. I offered to be the companion of Alonzo's watch; but this he abſolutely refuſed. However, we compromiſed the difference by ſtipulating that I ſhould ſleep in an adjoining chamber, which communicated by a door with that which he was reſolved to occupy.

"The neceſſary arrangements being made, and Alonzo having provided himſelf with loaded piſtols and a ſtiletto, about midnight the

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the lady conducted us to our apartments, and bidding us farewel, not without ſome mixture of uneaſineſs, retired to the oppoſite wing of the building, where ſhe and her family had been latterly accuſtomed to repoſe.

CHAP. XV.

'I APPROVE the fancy of the goblin,' ſaid Alonzo, looking round him; 'this chamber is one of the moſt pleaſant and commodious of the building. It is vexatious that this good woman, whoſe circumſtances are not opulent, ſhould be driven from ſo ſuitable a habitation by ſome ſecret ſcheme

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ſcheme of villany, of which the motive ſeems at preſent incomprehenſible. I don't expect to be diſturbed to-night: the ſervants ſaw my arms, and aſſiſted me to charge them; the ghoſt, whoever he is, will not want information of this circumſtance. But the repoſe I expect to enjoy will corroborate my ſuſpicion of treachery, and we may conſult at our leiſure ſome more certain and ſecret method of detection.'

"I continued ſome time in converſation with Alonzo, whoſe ſuſpicions I felt ſtrongly inclined to adopt. Before we ſeparated, we locked both our chambers on the inſide, leaving open the door of communication. I then retired to my allotted chamber, and threw myſelf on my bed in my clothes. Alonzo ſat down to read; he ſpoke to me at intervals, and I replied; till, overcome with the fatigue of the unuſually long walk I had taken, I ſunk into a deep ſleep, in which I continued till arouſed by the repetition of my name. I ſtarted from my ſlumber, and beheld a figure hanging over me, which

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imagination might have eaſily transformed to that of a ghaſtly ſpectre. It was Alonzo who ſtood by my ſide with a taper in his hand; his countenance was overſpread with livid paleneſs, his hair ſtood erect, his eyes ſeemed ſtarting from their ſockets, and his frame ſhook with convulſive tremors.

"Struck with the characters of horror ſo viſibly impreſſed on his appearance, I uttered ſome ſudden ejaculations of amazement; and perceiving him ready to ſink to the earth, aroſe to ſupport him. I led him into the adjoining apartment, where I obliged him to ſwallow ſome of the wine which the lady had ordered to be provided for our refreſhment.

'I have been accuſtomed to ſcenes of bloodſhed and diſmay!' ſaid Alonzo, ſuddenly recovering his utterance; 'my eyes have been ſhocked by the deadly devaſtations of war—my ears have been aſſailed by the piercing ſhrieks of human miſery!—But ſuch a ſpectacle of horror as I have this night witneſſed—— Hark!' he continued,

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tinued, looking wildly towards the door, 'did you not hear a ſound in the gallery?'

"It was long ere Alonzo could aſſume compoſure to give me the following extraordinary relation:—

'Perceiving your inclination to ſleep,' ſaid Alonzo, 'I ceaſed to importune you with converſation, and began to read with attention, till feeling ſomewhat weary, I threw myſelf on my bed. Light ſlumbers at intervals deceived my ſenſes; my ideas wandered from the preſent ſcene, till recalled to a recollection of my ſituation by a diſtant noiſe, which appeared to be that of the unbarring of a door. Signora Perlotto's relation inſtantly recurred to my memory: I ſtarted, and raiſing myſelf on my left arm, liſtened with deep attention. The ſounds increaſed preciſely as Signora Perlotto had deſcribed them. I heard the footſteps advancing along the gallery in a pace ſlowly ſolemn;—ſtill ſupporting myſelf on my left

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arm, I caught one of the piſtols which lay on the bed beſide me, but felt myſelf ſeized with an indeſcribable ſenſation, which allowed me not ſtrength to riſe from it. The door, though we had carefully locked it, flew open: a figure entered—it was that of a man, tall, pale, and habited in a morning robe of blue Venetian ſatin. It croſſed the chamber, and ſtalked to that part of it which is oppoſite to the foot of the bed; it turned towards me, and croſſing the arms, ſtood for ſome minutes in a muſing attitude. Conceive the aſtoniſhment with which I contemplated this figure, which ſeemed to be that of a man of thirty; the long pale countenance was ſhaded by dark diſhevelled hair, but its expreſſion was more ſorrowful than terrifying. It raiſed its eyes to me with a ſtedfaſt but melancholy compoſure, whilſt mine continued rivetted on it with the ſtupid gaze of amazement. The countenance with which it regarded me was more adapted to inſpire compaſſion, than to impreſs terror: I felt the piſtol drop from my hand.

The

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The figure raiſed its right hand from its breaſt, and gently waved it towards the door. I ſtarted from my bed, and ſtood upright. It advanced three paces; then ſtopping, it regarded me with an air of wiſtful and imploring ſolicitude. Again it turned towards the door, waving its hand to me to follow.

'No longer doubting that the being before me was ſupernatural, and believing it to be delegated by the Almighty to accompliſh ſome ſolemn purpoſe of his myſterious providence, I thought it would be impiety to endeavour to counteract the impulſes it wiſhed to inſpire, and feeling myſelf ſuddenly endued with a fortitude that ſeemed ſuperhuman, I advanced to the table, and with my left hand ſeizing a light, whilſt I graſped my ſtiletto in my right, I boldly prepared to follow my viſionary conductor, who appeared to conſider my movements with melancholy complacency. It glided before me through the gallery, down the ſtaircaſe, and through the hall,

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from whence I continued to follow it through a long narrow paſſage, at the end of which was a ſtaircaſe that led to the vaults beneath the houſe. I caſt a glance into the dark deep abode I was invited to explore;—the idea of deſcending into theſe ſubterranean receſſes with a ſpectre ariſen from the grave, ſuddenly called to my imagination images of ſupernatural horror. I ſtopped. The phantom, which hovered on the edge of the ſtaircaſe, turned and obſerved me with an expreſſion of anxiety ſtill more melancholy and paſſionate. I looked backwards, as if inclined to retreat; it uttered a deep ſigh. I felt my fortitude revive; and fervently recommending myſelf to the protection of the holy Saints, I determined to purſue the apparition, ſhould it even conduct me to the dark center of the earth!

CHAP.

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CHAP. XVI.

'I FOLLOWED the ſpectre,' continued Alonzo, 'down the ſteep ſtone ſtaircaſe, and through ſeveral vaults, till we arrived in that which ſeemed to be the moſt obſcure and diſtant. Having reached the remoteſt part of this diſmal receſs, it ſtopped, and turning towards me, regarded me fixedly for a moment, then looked downwards, as if it wiſhed me to remark the particular ſpot it ſtood on. I obſerved it was covered with a large bluiſh flag. The ſpectre continued to regard me with an expreſſion of which words can convey no adequate idea, whilſt I ſtood awaiting in breathleſs expectation the cataſtrophe of this ſtrange and awful ſummons: then uttering a deep groan,

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the phantom ſtamped on the ſpot it ſtood on, and ſuddenly throwing back its head, diſcovered a wide and frightful gaſh in the throat; and whilſt I continued to gaze on it, it ſeemed, like the viſionary tints of the rainbow, to melt and mingle with the ſurrounding atmoſphere, till it utterly faded from my view.

'I remained for ſome moments,' continued Alonzo, 'fixed and frozen in the torpor of terrified amazement. An event ſo horrible, ſo unexpected, ſo utterly repugnant to every argument my reaſon had hitherto adopted, ſubverted for a period the operation of my thinking faculties. I ſcarcely know, I cannot recollect how I returned from that ſcene of more than ſepulchral gloom and horror; and even now I am tempted, by the confuſion of my ideas, to doubt the reality of the ſurrounding objects. Perhaps,' he continued, caſting a vacant ſtare around him, 'perhaps theſe apartments, this furniture, perhaps even you, Father Ignatius, are but the offſpring of fevered

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fevered fancy, that the recent ſcene of horror is but the fearful illuſion of a dream; and that on awaking, I ſhall find myſelf repoſing tranquilly beneath my father's roof.'

" Alonzo," continued Ignatius, " ſunk into a deep reverie; but his agitated features ſtill confeſſed the perturbation of his ſpirit. I acknowledge I was almoſt inclined to believe that the ſtrange and fearful circumſtances he had related, had been the coinage of his own diſtempered imagination, during a ſlumber of which he had been unconſcious.

" I perſuaded him to throw himſelf on the bed; but the perturbation of his mind admitted not of repoſe. By degrees he became more tranquil and collected; and in proportion as his reaſon reſumed its aſcendency, the reality of the facts he had repeated ſeemed to become more decidedly aſcertained to his own conviction.

' Much as I have ſuffered by this adventure,' ſaid he, ' convinced that it muſt

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lead to ſome important diſcovery, I am far from regretting the part I have acted in it. Yet methinks I perceive in your countenance ſome ſymptoms of incredibility. See, the dawn of the morning gleams through the curtains; come with me, and I will convince you: I will lead you through the paſſages I have deſcribed, and which till this night I have never ſeen or heard of.'

"I followed Alonzo; we deſcended the ſtaircaſe, traverſed the hall, and entered the long narrow paſſage he had deſcribed to me, at the end of which we found the narrow ſtone ſtairs. He caſt a look of terror down the gloomy deſcent; a ſudden ſhuddering ſeized him.

'You are now convinced,' ſaid he, graſping my arm. 'Come, let us quit theſe gloomy receſſes; this night we will return and explore their fatal myſteries; meantime, till we have witneſſed the concluſion of this adventure, let us keep it a profound ſecret. Come

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Come into the gardens,—the air may refresh me; I must prepare to meet Signora Perlotto with my accustomed cheerfulness.'

"As we walked, we arranged our plan of operation. The lady, whose anxiety on our account had suffered her to enjoy but little repose, soon perceived us from her window, and immediately joined us. She eagerly enquired how we had rested. I replied that my sleep had been profound, and Alonzo assured her that his had not been broken.

'Yet,' said the lady with an air of distrust, 'as I was too solicitous on your account to rest, distant as my apartment is, I more than once imagined I heard uncommon noises!'

'But you must recollect,' said Alonzo, 'that the rest of a soldier is not easily broken. I have been accustomed to sleep on the bare earth, and have enjoyed salutary repose whilst the bombs and cannons have thundered around me, and threatened to

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cruſh the roof that ſheltered me; judge then what impreſſion the light ſtep of your airy viſitant was likely to make on ſuch organs as mine! Yet one circumſtance engenders a ſuſpicion that he has been playing his accuſtomed pranks. I recollect having locked my chamber-door at night; yet, to my ſurpriſe, found it open in the morning.'

" Signora Perlotto appeared alarmed.

' Why that look of terror?—You ſee your ſprite has treated me with great civility; but as this circumſtance, whatever may be its cauſe, has ſtrongly excited our curioſity, this good Father and I are determined to watch again to-night with greater vigilance.'

" We then agreed to return before ſupper, and bade the lady farewel. When we reached home, I perſuaded Alonzo to take a ſleepy potion, by means of which he enjoyed ſome hours' repoſe, and awoke refreſhed, and comparatively tranquil.

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CHAP. XVII.

"AT the appointed hour we returned to the houſe of Signora Perlotto, accompanied by a ſtout ſpirited fellow, a Florentine, the favourite domeſtic of Alonzo, to whom we partially confided our plan. Alonzo, under pretence of wanting clothes to dreſs at an early hour on the following day, ſent by this perſon a portmanteau, in which we had concealed pickaxes and ſome other implements, which we judged we ſhould find neceſſary to aſſiſt in the completion of our deſign.

"At

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"At twelve we retired to our apartments, accompanied by the Florentine.

'You have heard, Giovani,' ſaid Alonzo, 'that our buſineſs to-night is to keep watch for a ghoſt, who is ſaid to infeſt theſe apartments!'

'Yes, Signor,' returned Giovani, 'and it is a ſervice I don't at all like to be preſſed into. I ſhould have no objection to tilting a little with the living; but as to your ghoſts and goblins, of whom the ſervants have been telling me ſuch frightful hiſtories——'

'Theſe are chimeras,' ſaid Alonzo; 'the ſecret which I have to entruſt you with is important. The truth is, that Signora Perlotto has received information of a treaſure which lies concealed in a certain vault belonging to this manſion; and as ſhe could not entruſt a ſecret of ſuch moment to the diſcretion of any of the perſons who ſurround her, ſhe has devolved on me the important

important office of this ſearch, in which it will be your buſineſs to aſſiſt.'

" As to rooting up pots of money, Giovani ſaid that might be a pleaſant employment enough; but as to engaging in any kind of conflict with ghoſts, that was not the part of any layman whatever; and that if his dear maſter would follow his advice, he would remove to ſome leſs obnoxious part of the manſion, and leave thoſe ſpiritual gentry to the management of his Reverence here, (meaning me), who being an eccleſiaſtic, undoubtedly knew how to keep them in order, and treat them as they deſerved.

'See, blockhead!' ſaid Alonzo, opening the portmanteau, and exhibiting the tools, 'are ſpades and pickaxes ſuitable weapons to combat ghoſts with? Come, drink ſome wine to inſpire you with courage, and prepare to aſſiſt in our operations.'

" In

"In about two hours, when all the family were at reſt, we deſcended with as little noiſe as poſſible, carrying with us the tools we had provided. We followed Alonzo, who, urged by the ardour of a ſtrongly intereſted curioſity, led the way with a firm ſtep and undaunted courage.

"We deſcended to the vaults, and paſſed through ſeveral till we came to one where Alonzo ſtopped, and darting at me a look full of meaning, he held up the light he carried, and I diſtinctly perceived the broad blue flag he had deſcribed.

"I acknowledge my blood ran cold at this unequivocal confirmation of the circumſtances he had related. Pale and horror-ſtruck for an interval, we gazed on each other in ſilence; then looked fearfully around, as if in apprehenſion of ſeeing the ghaſtly ſpectre glide from ſome obſcure receſs of the gloomy cavern; whilſt the young Tuſcan, ſtruck with our emotion, regarded us by turns with looks of terror and curioſity.

'Come,'

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'Come,' ſaid I, fearing the effect which the recollection of the adventure of the preceding night might produce on the ſpirits of Alonzo 'come, it is time to begin our work.'

'Yes,' ſaid Alonzo, ſetting down his light, and ſeizing a mattock, 'it is time!—Come, Giovani, the good Father will hold the lights for us whilſt we work.'

"Giovani obeyed, though with evident diffidence and reluctance.

"The operation was not difficult. They raiſed the blue flag and ſome others adjoining to it, and with ſhovels dug away the earth beneath. They had already dug to the depth of four feet, and I began to doubt whether our reſearches would lead to the diſcovery we ſo ardently ſought, when the Florentine exclaimed that ſome hard ſubſtance impeded his ſpade. The ſame circumſtance occurred to Alonzo, though they ſtood ſome feet aſunder. On clearing away

away the earth, ſome whitiſh object was diſcovered; and Giovani, throwing down his ſpade, exclaimed in terror that he believed it was a corpſe in a winding-ſheet! Alonzo, as I leaned over the pit, darted at me a look which indicated the ſame conviction.

'Come,' ſaid I, ſetting down the lights, and leaping into the pit to aſſiſt them, 'come, let us perſevere in our efforts, let us trace to its iniquitous ſource this dreadful myſtery which the providence of the Almighty unfolds by means ſo miraculous!'

"We diſengaged from the earth a large and heavy parcel that was wrapped in folds of linen, which, decayed by the damp of the earth, had partly mouldered away. As we laid it on the ground, we perceived that the linen was ſtained with blood; we opened it, and found the body of a man, which appeared to have lain ſome time in the ground, but part

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part of a robe of blue ſatin, in which it had been habited, ſtill remained entire.

'See!' cried Alonzo, holding out this fragment with a look of unſpeakable horror; "examine the body, Father; you will find the deadly wound.'

"I did ſo, and perceived that the windpipe had been completely ſevered.

'But to what does this diſcovery lead?' ſaid Alonzo; 'here, indeed, are the mangled remains of an unfortunate who has fallen the victim of avarice or of cruelty! But what indication have we received which may point out and bring to puniſhment the perpetrator of the bloody deed?'

"He ſhook the linen as he ſpoke, and a parcel dropped from it;—it was a large pocket-book. I eagerly opened it; the firſt words which ſtruck my ſight was the name of Anſelmo Dalmonte in large characters. Merciful Heaven! the murdered body I beheld

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beheld was that of the husband of the unfortunate Hortensia—that husband so tenderly lamented, and so anxiously and vainly sought for—a victim to the black treachery of interested villany—deprived of the holy sacraments of his Church, of the sacred rites of Christian sepulture, lay mouldering in unconsecrated clay like the vilest malefactor! I uttered a cry of grief and horror; and had not Alonzo and the Tuscan sustained my shivering limbs, I should have fallen into the pit from which we had just raised the mangled remains of the ill-fated Anselmo.

"Alonzo, to whom I had frequently mentioned this unhappy person, instantly conceived the occasion of my violent emotion; and his adoring soul sympathized with mine in acknowledging and revering the mysterious dispensations of Almighty Providence.

"More collected than I, he examined the pocket-book, which, to my inexpressible satisfaction, contained those bills of exchange which Hortensia mentioned that her husband had obtained previous to his departure, and

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and which the traitors who murdered him, fearing that to negotiate them would lead to diſcovery, had doubtleſs interred in the ſame grave with their unfortunate proprietor, contenting themſelves with the rich booty which his jewels and ſpecie had afforded them. On further examination, we alſo found a parcel of bloody clothes and a knife ſtained with blood—the inſtrument, doubtleſs, with which the inhuman deed had been perpetrated. Thus had the murderers of Dalmonte conſigned to the earth every evidence of their atrocious crime, and, in the blindneſs of human folly, vainly imagined they had ſecured it from detection, unconſcious of that all-pervading eye, whoſe vigilance no fraudful ſubterfuges can elude—of that Almighty Power which could call the witneſſes of their guilt from the black center of the earth, and even raiſe from the ſleep of death the pale inhabitants of the grave to teſtify againſt the horrid crime of murder!"

CHAP.

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CHAP. XVIII.

THE Monk pauſed—the attentive circle ſhuddered. Juſt then the Caſtle bell tolled one ſingle ſolemn ſtroke. They ſtarted, and regarded each other in amazement.

"Can it be the wind that ſhakes it?" ſaid the Baron.

They heard another toll, and, after an awful interval, a third.

"This is, this muſt be ſupernatural!" exclaimed Ignatius; "theſe omens are the forerunners of ſome ſolemn event."

"A

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"A ſtrange concluſion, methinks," ſaid De Courcy; "any one can ſtrike a bell! But on this point I can ſatisfy myſelf by aſcending to the battlements. If any inhabitant of the air amuſes itſelf by ſounding theſe ſolemn peals, it will have no occaſion for the bell-cord."

He attempted to go, but Eglantine, pale and ſhuddering, caught his arm, and paſſionately conjured him not to expoſe himſelf to danger. Whilſt he warmly expoſtulated with her on the weakneſs of her terrors, a ſudden burſt of thunder ſhook the Caſtle to its foundations, and the caſements rattled violently with the exploſion.

"This is aſtoniſhing!" ſaid De Courcy, who had liſtened in ſilent wonder. He haſtily diſengaged himſelf from Eglantine, and threw open one of the caſements; he raiſed his eyes to the ethereal arch, unſhadowed by a ſingle cloud: it glittered with innumerable fires. He turned towards the door,

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door, but his tenderneſs recalled him to Eglantine, who, terrified and breathleſs, had ſunk on a couch. He fondly raiſed her in his arms, and endeavoured to ſooth her fears, and animate her ſpirits.

The Baron rung violently for lights, and the panic-ſtruck domeſtics ruſhed in a crowd to the ſaloon.

Another peal of thunder now ſhook the maſſy walls of the building, whilſt, as before, the ſerenity of the external atmoſphere rendered the prodigy aſtoniſhing; not a breath diſturbed, not a cloud overcaſt the firmament, except a few light vapours which hovered round the moon's pale orb, and partially eclipſed her ſetting luſtre.

"Yes," ſaid the Monk, ſtarting from the ſolemn pauſe of wonder, "ſome dread diſcovery is at hand. Theſe phœnomena are miraculous; when thus the common laws

of nature are violated, the awful portents are not ſent in vain."

"What you term a violation of the laws of nature," replied the Marquis, "may be no more than ſome of her phœnomena, which appear aſtoniſhing only becauſe they are ſingular."

"I cannot avoid believing," ſaid the Baron, "that theſe terrific thunders forebode ſome wondrous diſcovery."

'The manifeſtation of my brother's murderers you undoubtedly imagine; and, did they ſhroud their crimes beneath this roof, one might almoſt imagine that theſe awful thunders were ſent from on high to ſhake their guilty ſouls! But where is their efficacy when directed againſt the innocent?"

"Of the counſels of Providence," ſaid Ignatius, "we may not preſume to judge."

"True; but we may avail ourſelves of the reaſon with which it has endued us in the inveſtigation of truth, and the detection of falſehood. My brother was a good man

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whilſt in this world; he wiſhed for and endeavoured to promote the felicity of his brethren of mankind; and I hope and believe that in the inviſible world ſome more dignified occupation has been appointed to his emancipated ſpirit, than that of returning to this nether ſphere capriciouſly to ſport with the weakneſs entailed on humanity, and inflict this viſionary miſery on the perſons, who, whilſt he lived, were moſt dear to him."

Here a louder and longer peal of thunder ſeemed to roll in more tremendous murmurs through the vaulted roofs of the fabric.

"Hark!" ſaid Ignatius; "the thunders of Heaven ſeem to reprove its violated majeſty."

"And by whom has its majeſty been violated?" ſaid De Courcy fiercely; "not ſurely by me!—My love, my Eglantine, why theſe tremors? Do you not lean on the

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the faithful boſom of your De Courcy? Are you not protected by his arms? Oh Eglantine! whilſt thus I hold you ſafe, and encircled in my embrace, my ſoul experiences a ſweet ſerenity which no external circumſtance ſeems poſſeſſed of power to diſcompoſe!"

But though De Courcy had liſtened to thoſe alarming ſounds without any mixture of terror, they excited in his mind a powerful curioſity, mingled with a vague ſuſpicion of deceit. He wiſhed ardently to explore inſtantly every apartment of the Caſtle; but his tenderneſs for Eglantine reſtrained the inclination. He ſtill ſupported her in his arms, and endeavoured to ſooth her agitation with the fondeſt endearment. She raiſed her eyes to his with tender gratitude, and meeting the reproving glances of the Lady Geneviora, with timid bluſhes ſhe haſtily diſengaged herſelf from his arms.

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The Baron and Ignatius continued to converſe on the prodigies of the night; but De Courcy paid no farther attention to their converſation:—all his thoughts were engroſſed by Eglantine; as he hung over her with looks of fond and watchful ſenſibility, ſhe fancied his countenance expreſſed the divine benevolence of a guardian angel—it beamed ineffable complacency and love.

The night was ſomewhat advanced when they ſeparated. When Eglantine quitted De Courcy, ſhe felt a reluctance ſhe had never before experienced. She retired to her apartment, where ſhe continued ſome time in earneſt converſation with Iſabelle on the wonders of the night: then recollecting the communication ſhe had been promiſed in the morning, eagerly enquired reſpecting Godfrey's adventure.

CHAP.

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CHAP. XIX.

"YOU desired me to write you such particulars as might occur at the Castle during your absence, Mademoiselle," said Isabelle; "but I thought there was no use in tormenting you unnecessarily, and that some hours of felicity were due to you after so much suffering. But certainly some strange circumstances did occur, and one amongst them struck me more forcibly than the rest.

"A few nights after the Marquis had

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joined you at Le Chateau des Rochers, Manon, Liſette, and I ſat converſing in your chamber, till our terrors aroſe to ſuch a fooliſh height, that we abſolutely feared to retire to our own rooms, on account of being obliged to paſs the end of the picture corridor, for the noiſes there had been lately more than uſually loud and terrific. Having ſat till the fire was burned out, and our light almoſt extinguiſhed, we determined to ſummon reſolution to paſs the corridor, as the doors of the other paſſages were all barred at that late hour. To encourage the others, I took the light, and went firſt; but as we approached the corridor, our ears were aſſailed by a noiſe ſo loud and terrible, that my two companions fled with precipitation. I followed them ſome paces, when the repetition of the noiſe arreſted my ſteps, for I knew it to be the howl of Leone, the faithful animal which, on the fatal day we all ſo well remember, ſo pathetically invoked the Baron to the ſuccour of his wounded

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wounded Lord. Whilſt I ſtopped in aſtoniſhment, the creature, whom I had never before ſeen in the upper part of the houſe, darted towards me in ſtrange agitation, and ſeizing my robe in his mouth, drew me into the corridor, notwithſtanding my reſiſting efforts. Liſette and Manon, obſerving what object had occaſioned their terror, obeyed my call, and followed at a little diſtance, whilſt the animal, having drawn me to the door of the chamber from whence the noiſes uſually proceed, ſuddenly looſed his hold, and flying to the door with the fierceneſs of a lion, placed himſelf in a rampant poſture with his forepaws againſt it, and ſhook it with ſuch violent fury, and ſuch ſavage growlings, that I thought he would have torn it from the hinges; then turning on me his glaring eyes, ſeemed, by his impatient howls, to call for my aſſiſtance.

Extremely aſtoniſhed at a phœnomenon ſo extraordinary, and fearful leſt the Baron and the Lady Geneviora

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viora ſhould be diſturbed by the violent exertions of the animal, we immediately deſcended, and called to the men, ſome of whom were ſtill up. I ſent one of them to call Godfrey, who ſoon obeyed the ſummons. As I had often been diſpleaſed by his incredulous raillery, I wiſhed him to witneſs this ſingular circumſtance. He obſerved the conduct of the creature with much ſurpriſe and curioſity, and remarked that it rather confirmed than baniſhed a ſuſpicion he had conceived, that ſome perſon, for illicit purpoſes poſſibly, was ſporting with the weak credulity of the houſehold.—'Brute animals,' he continued, 'were ſometimes ſaid to be intimidated by ſupernatural appearances, but he had never heard that they excited their rage; and if, by ſome myſterious inſtinct, the dog could diſcover that the ſoul of his deceaſed Lord ſtill hovered in thoſe apartments, his ſenſations would be expreſſed by demonſtrations of melancholy affection, not by his preſent indications of outrageous fury.'

"Whilſt

" Whilſt he ſpoke, Leone continued his unavailing exertions to force open the door; and from time to time ſeemed to call on the ſpectators to aſſiſt him.

' Poor animal !' ſaid Godfrey, advancing to the door, ' moſt willingly would I indulge thy deſire of entering this apartment; nor would I wiſh the unknown felon who thus excites thy reſentment, a ſeverer chaſtiſement than that of falling into thy clutches! Could we not procure the key of this apartment?'

" Euſtace, who was preſent, ſaid that he knew where it was uſually depoſited; and, taking Jaſper with him, becauſe he feared to go alone, preſently returned with the key.

" Godfrey opened the door: the dog ſprang into the chamber with ſavage joy; and as there were ſo many of us, we did not fear to follow, and obſerve his motions.

" Leone meantime flew round the room,

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ſnuffing the air, ſmelling the furniture, and exhibiting ſtrong ſymptoms of diſappointed rage. He then ſtopped at the door which leads to the inner apartments, and ſhewed the ſame ferocious deſire to enter it which he had already demonſtrated in the corridor. But the key of this door could not be procured.

"Godfrey was much aſtoniſhed at the violent agitation of the animal, and again repeated his conviction that no ſupernatural viſitant had occaſioned it, and avowed a reſolution of ſpending a night in thoſe chambers—a plan which, on my ſtrong oppoſition, he appeared to relinquiſh, though he only deferred his purpoſe in order to execute it with more ſecrecy. The event of his enterpriſe I leave to himſelf to relate. I deſired him to come here at this hour, and I believe I hear him in the antichamber."

Whilſt Iſabelle went to admit Godfrey, Eglantine

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Eglantine ruminated on the ſingular circumſtance which had been related to her.

Eglantine, who had ſeen, but never before converſed with Godfrey, was much pleaſed with the intelligence of his countenance, and the ingenuous modeſty of his manners. Perceiving her impatience to hear his relation, he thus commenced it:—

"Iſabelle has acquainted you, Mademoiſelle, with the circumſtance which arouſed my curioſity. The ſtrange and furious perturbation of the animal inſpired me with a ſtrong conviction that thoſe chambers were haunted by the living, not by the dead. I felt not a doubt, from various circumſtances, that ſome villanous conſpiracy againſt the peace of this family was on foot, although I could not poſſibly conjecture its motive. Determined, if poſſible, to detect it, in my incautious ardour

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I loudly expreſſed my reſolution; but Iſabelle's ſtrong oppoſition to my deſign rendered me inſtantly conſcious of the imprudence of its avowal, and induced me to appear to relinquiſh it, in the expectation of being able to effect it with the greater privacy. For this purpoſe I contrived to procure the keys of the haunted chambers ſecretly. I one evening conveyed privately into them wood to make a fire, a caſe of loaded piſtols, and a ſword; I carefully locked the doors, and waited, not I confeſs without emotion, for the hour when the family retired to reſt.

"As the Caſtle bell tolled one, I returned to the haunted corridor. I entered the chamber, and found it preciſely in the order in which I had left it. I examined my piſtols, and ſticking them in my belt, I took my ſword in one hand, and a taper in the other, and proceeded through the whole ſuite of apartments."

"The enterpriſe was a bold one," ſaid

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Eglantine, " for you then believed the circumſtances which ſo ſtrongly intereſted your curioſity to originate in human malice, and might hence have reaſonably feared to become its victim."

" The powerful feelings which impelled me ſuffered me to fear nothing, Mademoiſelle, except that nothing would occur either to confirm or to baniſh my ſuſpicions; for if, as I then ſuppoſed, thoſe alarming circumſtances had been produced to anſwer ſome illicit purpoſe, it was natural to imagine that its authors, notwithſtanding my precaution, might have intelligence of my deſign. Walls are ſaid to have ears; and ſurely theſe ancient ſtructures, contrived, as one would imagine, for the purpoſes of concealment and evaſion, ſeem not only to have ears, but alſo eyes. It was therefore natural to ſuppoſe that ſuch human ſpectres, if aware of my deſign, would avoid an encounter with a man prepared to give them a reception far different from that which the

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the panic cowardice excited by their manœuvres in the houſehold, might naturally lead them to expect from others.

" Having accurately examined all the inner apartments, where every thing wore the aſpect of profound tranquillity, I returned to the outward; and having carefully locked both doors, I felt all round the arras left any perſon ſhould be concealed behind it; and in the full perſuaſion that my reſt would remain undiſturbed for the night, I determined to paſs it as conveniently as I could. I kindled a large fire, for the apartment felt chill and comfortleſs; and drawing an elbow chair near it, and a table, on which I laid my ſword and piſtols, and ſet a light, I diſpoſed myſelf quietly to reſt. And now, Mademoiſelle," continued Godfrey, heſitating, " methinks I repent having begun this relation, and fear to continue it;—the circumſtances I have to relate appear ſo extraordinary, that I am apprehenſive you will impute to me the ſuperſtitious

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ſtitious folly of repeating to you a ſtrange and frightful dream, which my fears conjured up to delude my imagination."

"I am little inclined to impute cowardice to a perſon whoſe conduct evinced the contrary extreme of raſhneſs," replied Eglantine; "pray proceed—my curioſity is extreme."

"I fear," returned the young man, ſtill heſitating, "that the circumſtances I have to relate may too forcibly agitate your ſpirits. It was imprudent in you, Iſabelle, to mention this matter to your Lady."

"Since it has been mentioned," ſaid Eglantine impatiently, "it is no longer a time to raiſe ſcruples; I beg you will continue your relation."

Godfrey bowed, and proceeded.

CHAP.

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CHAP. XX.

" What may this mean
" That thou, dead corſe,
" Reviſit'ſt thus the glimpſes of the moon,
" Making night hideous ?"

SHAKESPEARE.

" I CONTINUED to lean in my elbow chair in careleſs ſerenity, how long I know not. I felt drowſy; I nodded in imperfect ſlumbers, and indiſtinct forms began to float before my eyes. Theſe fleeting ſlumbers were

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were chaſed by a ſound. I ſtarted, and looking around me, imputed my alarm to the wind which ſwept in low murmurs through the corridor, and faintly ſhook the door of the chamber. The wick of my lamp was long; as I reached out my hand to trim it, my eyes accidentally turned to the oppoſite ſide of the chamber, where they were ſtruck by an appearance——"

Godfrey ſtopped; he ſhuddered, and looked around him.

"What appearance?" aſked Eglantine in fearful expectation.

"I once was bold as a young lion," ſaid Godfrey, "but the occurrences of that night have made me the veriеſt coward!"

"In pity to my impatience proceed!" ſaid Eglantine. "What appearance did you ſee?"

"In the obſcurity I could only diſcern the figure of a man. In that moment I felt no fear, only a powerful emotion of amazement,

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amazement. Starting on my feet, I seized a pistol, which, instantly recollecting my former suspicions, I presented at the figure, which, heedless of my motions, was advancing towards me with a slow and solemn step. I drew the trigger—the pistol missed fire. The figure meantime approached till it advanced so near that the table was our only barrier of separation. I then felt a strange alarmed inquietude—sensations unfelt before rushed through my brain. I stood as if rooted to the earth, my starting eyeballs fixed wildly on the appearance, which, now stationary on the opposite side of the table, gazed as stedfastly on me.

"The lamp was on the table between us; though its light was dim and wavering, it but too well ascertained the object it faintly illumined. The figure of the murdered Marquis stood distinctly revealed to my view!"

"The murdered Marquis! Powers of Heaven! Could there have been no delusion?"

"None,

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" None, Mademoiſelle—it was impoſſible!—How could I err? Could I fail to recogniſe his dreſs—the ſame he wore on the day when the fatal blow was ſtruck—his mien—his ſtature—his features, changed indeed, but not to be miſtaken!—his countenance disfigured by the blood which ſtill ſeemed to flow freſh from the wound on his forehead;—his eyeballs, fixed in the ghaſtly glare of death, were bent on me with ſtedfaſt ſternneſs, and ſhot through my inmoſt ſoul horrors of which, till then, I could never form a conception—horrors which ſurely none but ſupernatural objects can poſſibly inſpire!"

" Bleſſed Father! Oh that you had poſſeſſed courage to queſtion it!"

" Impoſſible, Mademoiſelle! Its freezing glance congealed me with myſterious terror—my limbs ſeemed ſtiffened to marble, and as marble I became immoveable and mute; even my heart no longer throbbed—the dreadful ſpectre, whoſe motionleſs eyeballs

balls were ſtill rivetted on me with the ſame indeſcribable ſternneſs, ſeemed to poſſeſs the fabled power of Meduſa. I felt my recollection forſake me by degrees; ſtrange ſhadows ſeemed to flit around me—ſtrange ſounds reſounded in my ears. Yet, ſtill the ſame terrible object fixed and faſcinated my regards, till the powers of reaſon and of life became ſuſpended, and I ſunk on the floor in a trance in which I muſt have continued a conſiderable time, as on my revival I found my fire and lamp extinguiſhed.

"To the terrible retroſpect which filled my mind, my conſcience now ſuperadded bitter ſentiments of ſelf-reproach. The Marquis had been my earlieſt benefactor;—my father, an old ſoldier, expiring on the field of battle, had devolved on his humanity the protection of my orphaned infancy; and though himſelf but a youth, he generouſly and faithfully fulfilled the truſt. Become his page, his favourite, I often ſlept in his tent, and ſhared with him the hard

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and ſcanty pittance found in the fields of war. He made me the companion of his young brother, my preſent loved and noble Lord. Fond of exciting the flame of emulation in the boſom of the young Count by ardent, but not envious competition, he made me the companion of his ſtudies; and when this noble youth, overlooking the wide diſtinction his ſuperior rank had placed between us, in the equallizing ſpirit of generous attachment, forgetting that I was his inferior, remembered only that I was his friend, the Marquis with kindneſs yielded to his entreaties, and indulged our mutual deſire, that I ſhould attach myſelf to the fortunes of my young patron."

"But," ſaid Eglantine, "what grounds of ſelf-accuſation do theſe circumſtances afford?"

"Oh, I feel them but too ſeverely! The ſhade of my murdered Lord came not ſurely to amuſe itſelf with my fears in capricious cruelty; it expected, doubtleſs, that

that I ſhould liſten with ſtedfaſt ear and lion heart to the tale of myſterious horror it aroſe from the tomb to divulge. To me, as through a ſoftening medium, it wiſhed it to be tranſmitted to that brother, whoſe feelings might have been too ſeverely wounded had the terrible manifeſtation been preſented to himſelf. But my daſtard ſpirit ſhrunk from the momentous revelation. Yes," continued Godfrey, in increaſing agitation, " the coward ſhrinkings of my nature have refuſed peace to my departed Lord, and vengeance to my preſent!—The diſcontented ſpectre ſtill walks unappeaſed—unrevenged! Deteſting my puſillanimity, I determined to vanquiſh it. Three ſucceſſive nights did I watch in that chamber in vain with reſtleſs ſolicitude. I adjured the *manes* of my murdered Lord, but I was no longer deemed worthy to reſtore peace to his troubled ſpirit; yet ſtill it hovers in thoſe chambers, for Leone frequently, when looſed from his chain, returns to the corridor, and fills the air with his impatient

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impatient howlings. Even this night, when the Caſtle ſhook with thoſe ſtrange portentous thunders, the animal exhibited ſtill more ferocious ſymptoms of fury. Father Ignatius witneſſed them when he deſcended to ſpeak peace to the terrors of the houſehold, and himſelf aſſiſted us to bind the exaſperated creature in a ſtronger chain."

"This is moſt wonderful!" ſaid Eglantine.

"Wonderful indeed, Mademoiſelle! Such are the circumſtances I have to relate to my Lord: but how enforce his belief of them? I know his nature. By this relation I ſhall not only excite his laughter, but I ſhall incur his contempt, perhaps his indignation. But I ſubmit the propriety of this communication to your judgment. Methinks, Mademoiſelle, if you were to repeat theſe circumſtances to the Marquis, you might eaſily perſuade him to credit them."

Eglantine,

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Eglantine, thunderſtruck at the ſtrange relation ſhe had heard, ſaid that in her preſent agitated ſtate of ſpirits, ſhe could decide on nothing; but that on the morrow ſhe would conſult Father Francis, and refer to his wiſdom the propriety of the purpoſed communication.

Godfrey withdrew, and Eglantine, unable to repoſe, paſſed the remainder of the night in converſing with Iſabelle, and anticipating the approach of morning, when ſhe had promiſed to meet and walk with the Marquis, whoſe ſoothing and intereſting tenderneſs ſeemed to afford a ſafe and ſacred aſylum to her troubled ſpirit.

CHAP.

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CHAP. XXI.

" Ferma :—é tempo di morte
" E non d'amore !"

METASTASIO.

EGLANTINE, with impatient joy, beheld the firſt dawnings of a glorious day; and having paid her morning adorations, ſhe haſtened to join De Courcy, whom ſhe ſaw awaiting her in the court of the Caſtle. He flew to meet her, and they walked together on a terrace that wound along the brow of the lofty cliffs which overhung the Atlantic.

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The ſun, now riſen above the horizon, and breaking through the crimſon clouds, threw his "long level line of ſtreaming light" over the trembling ſurface of the ocean, which reflected the ſplendours of the glowing atmoſphere, and ſtrongly contraſted the deep dark ſhadows of the rude and irregular precipices, riſing to ſtupendous elevation, and crowned with antique towers; whilſt the thick foreſt, which cloathed them, waved in mimic gloom in the boſom of the watery mirror.

De Courcy and Eglantine ſtood on a rock, and contemplated the ſcene with ſuch ſenſations as the children of Nature are wont to conſider the charms of their lovely parent. De Courcy turned to Eglantine, and beheld with joy that her pale countenance was animated by a ſmile of ſatisfaction.

"Well, my Eglantine," ſaid De Courcy, "I rejoice to perceive that your ſpirits are

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are ſomewhat lightened of the depreſſion which laſt night ſo much afflicted and alarmed me."

"Was it not natural I ſhould be terrified?"

"I believe it was; yet I ſhould wiſh you to avoid the too common propenſity of attributing to ſupernatural agency thoſe effects in which Nature may only ſomewhat deviate from her uſual operations."

"But what do you think of the circumſtances related by Father Ignatius—circumſtances which, as he witneſſed the facts he averred, muſt have been true?"

"I think the Monk choſe a very improper ſeaſon to terrify you with tales of horror;—to combat by rational argument the apprehenſions he ſaw you but too much inclined to indulge, would have been an office more ſuitable to his character. His ſtory reſembles a thouſand others which, when a child, I remember having liſtened to with eager attention. It ſeems ſingular, methinks, that theſe apparitions appear ſo

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ſtrangely averſe, to exhibiting themſelves in the daylight; ſurely to beings purely ſpiritual, light and darkneſs muſt be equal. To what then are we to aſcribe this ſtrange propenſity to haunt the midnight gloom, ſo univerſally attributed to them? Is it not that the weak prejudice of ſuperſtition connects the idea of terror with that of darkneſs? Is it not that the buſy power of imagination, then reigning with moſt ſupreme aſcendency, paints forms of ſhadowy horror on the ſurrounding gloom, and then, like the child who ſtarts at the bugbear it has dreſſed, ſhrinks with panic terror from the phantom of its own creation?"

"When you are with me," ſaid Eglantine, "all my fears ſeem diſſipated, and I can reaſon on theſe ſubjects with rational compoſure; but I feel that when you leave me, all my weakneſs will return."

"I wiſh," returned De Courcy with fervour, "I wiſh we might never more be ſeparated—I wiſh I could inſtantly remove you from a place of which the gloomy ſolitude

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ſolitude contributes to depreſs and weaken your ſpirits. Soon ſhall we have paid to the memory of my brother a ſufficient tribute of reſpect—ſoon, my Eglantine, you will be mine; and I ſhall find my own felicity in watching with guardian tenderneſs over your's—in endeavouring to avert from you every danger that might excite your apprehenſion—every ſolicitude that might invade your repoſe."

The ſweet ſoothings of fond and faithful affection were not loſt on a mind ſo exquiſitely ſuſceptible as that of Eglantine. In her tenderneſs for a lover ſo amiable and ſo beloved, her gratitude for the fervour of his attachment, and the bright anticipation of the future felicity it diſplayed to her view, every gloomy apprehenſion faded from her mind, and the breaſts of theſe young lovers experienced, for a happy interval, the ſweeteſt ſenſations of mutual fondneſs, animated and endeared by flattering promiſes of future hope and joy.

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Who has not remarked the ſtroke of calamity is often preceded by unuſual exhilaration of ſpirits? Is it that misfortune loves to imbitter the blow by dealing it at a period when the breaſt is leaſt prepared to receive it—when the ſenſe of preſent evil becomes more inſufferably poignant by being contraſted with the ſmiling form of recent felicity, now fled, perhaps, for ever!

They had protracted their walk till Eglantine, fearing the ſtrictures of the Lady Geneviora, perſuaded De Courcy to turn his reluctant ſteps towards the Caſtle. As they approached it, they perceived ſeveral men coming to meet them, amongſt whom they diſtinguiſhed the Monk Ignatius. When near enough to be heard, De Courcy ſaluted the Monk; but the latter, averting his eyes with a ſullen and indignant air, turned to the men by whom he was attended, and pointed to the Marquis. On this ſignal they immediately ſeized De Courcy, who,

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who, unarmed and defenceleſs, was unable to reſiſt, and, even in his firſt aſtoniſhment, incapable of demanding the meaning of a conduct ſo inſulting.

" Why this injurious treatment ?" turning fiercely to Ignatius, when he recovered the uſe of ſpeech, " why am I thus infamouſly ſeized like a common felon ?"

" Your own conſcience," replied the Monk ſternly, " will beſt reſolve the queſtion."

" My conſcience !" cried De Courcy.

" Yes, yes," replied the Monk, " your guilty conſcience !—this pretended ignorance, this obduracy of heart will avail you nothing. The black myſtery is by miracle revealed to the world. You have now only to endeavour to appeaſe the wrath of Heaven by a voluntary confeſſion of your crimes, and that ſincere contrition by which alone ſuch crimes can be expiated."

" Heavenly Powers !" exclaimed De Courcy, " muſt I liſten to ſuch language—

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endure ſuch accuſations? Your ſacred habit, Monk, protects you!"

"Protects me from what?—From the reſentment of a miſcreant whoſe diſcovered guilt no longer allows him the power of doing evil—who vainly ſtruggles in the bonds his crimes have incurred—above whoſe devoted head the ſword of juſtice hangs ſuſpended?—that ſword which ſoon ſhall fall with ſignal vengeance on the monſter laden with the conſciouſneſs of enormous guilt, and purſued by the execration of mankind!"

CHAP.

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CHAP. XXII.

DE COURCY viewed the Monk for an interval in mute amazement. "Surely," ſaid he, recovering more compoſure, "ſome ſtrange inſanity muſt have ſeized this unhappy man! But who are you?" turning fiercely to the perſons who held him, "who, at the inſtigation of a madman, dare thus to inſult and pinion me?"

"We do nothing, my Lord," replied one, who appeared to be the principal, "without legal authority. You are accuſed of the murder of the late Marquis, your brother; your effects have been ſearched; ſome diſ-

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coveries have been made that will ſtrongly corroborate the extraordinary facts which will be brought forward in evidence againſt you."

"The murder of my brother, my friend—I charged with ſuch a crime!—or is it I who am inſane? Is this ſcene an illuſion?"

"The murder of the Marquis!" repeated Eglantine, who had hitherto witneſſed this ſcene in ſilent conſternation, "De Courcy charged with the murder of his brother!"

Unable to ſupport a ſuggeſtion of ſo much horror, ſhe would have ſunk to the earth, had not De Courcy, burſting from the men who held him, ſupported her in his arms.

"My love, my Eglantine, retrieve your ſpirits—ſupport your fortitude! This infernal calumny will be eaſily diſproved—ſoon will the innocence of your De Courcy be manifeſted to the world; and if he now muſt leave you, ſoon will he return, in the triumph

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triumph of vindicated integrity, to claim his beloved affianced bride."

"Your bride!" exclaimed the Monk, advancing to De Courcy, and forcibly taking Eglantine from his arms, whilſt his fellowers again ſeized and pinioned the Marquis, "your bride!—the illuſtrious heireſs of D'Orival the bride of a murderer!"

"I would if poſſible command myſelf," ſaid De Courcy, ſtruggling with the violence of his indignation, "I would not forget the reverence due to your profeſſion—I would calmly demand an explanation of this treatment! Where is the Baron? Take me to his preſence!"

"He has poſitively commanded that his ſight may not be blaſted by an object ſo deteſted. He has ſeen but too often a monſter, whoſe enormous guilt has called up the ſhade of a murdered brother to teſtify againſt it!"

"Has a ghoſt then been my accuſer?" ſaid De Courcy with mingled indignation and contempt. "Some infamous artifices

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have been practiſed by my enemies!—But who are my enemies? I believed I had not any—I regarded each human creature as a friend; and my heart, with fraternal benevolence, embraced the whole circle of created beings!"

"If guilt could be ſcreened by profeſſions of innocence," replied the Monk, "where is the delinquent whoſe crimes would meet condemnation? Of your boaſted fraternal benevolence the proofs will ſoon be exhibited."

"Is there in reality ſuch an art as necromancy?" ſaid De Courcy, ſtarting as from a dream. "Have the powers of hell conſpired againſt me?—Where is this viſionary accuſer—this demon who aſſumes the form of my murdered brother? Why does he not now riſe from his dark receſs, and openly impeach me? Is it that the fiends themſelves participate in the weakneſs of human guilt, and ſhrink from the reproachful glance of injured innocence?"

"The evidences of your's," replied the

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Monk, " will be aſcertained before the tribunal of juſtice! You will be judged by men who, in their deciſions, cannot be influenced by any mercenary or partial conſiderations: ſubmit, in the interim, to the fate againſt which it is in vain to ſtruggle."

As he ſpoke, he bore Eglantine towards the Caſtle. Unable to remonſtrate, or even to complain, ſhe could only ſtretch her trembling hands, and turn her cloſing eyes to catch a laſt glimpſe of De Courcy, whoſe unpitying jailers tore him from her ſight—from the cheerful light of Heaven they tore him! Bearing him inſtantly to priſon, they threw him into one of thoſe deep and diſmal dungeons which were aſſigned to criminals of moſt flagitious guilt.

CHAP.

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CHAP. XXIII.

" Avaunt, and quit my ſight! Let the earth hide thee!
" Thy bones are marrowleſs, thy blood is cold!
" Thou haſt no ſpeculation in thoſe eyes,
" Which thou doſt glare with!"

SHAKESPEARE.

ON the preceding night, after Eglantine and the Marquis had retired, and that the Lady Geneviora had been led to her apartment by her women half frantic with terror, the Baron had remained much diſturbed. Ignatius, perceiving his diſcompoſure, had accompanied him to his apartment, where, after ſome farther converſation, he quitted him.

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The Baron felt himſelf in a ſtate of mind ſo gloomy and unpleaſant, that he was inclined to deſire the ſervant who attended him to have a bed removed into his apartment, for the purpoſe of detaining him for the remainder of the night; but unwilling to ſanction by his example the terrors which already but too powerfully poſſeſſed the minds of the houſehold, and which, in their preſence, he affected to treat as viſionary, he combated his inclination, and determining to try the efficacy of prayer for the relief of his mental perturbation, he diſmiſſed his attendant, and after the performance of his devotional exerciſes, ſeated himſelf by the fire, and endeavoured to retrieve by reflection the tranquillity of his mind.

The apartment he occupied was large and lofty; and the hangings of dark velvet threw over it a ſhade of more gloomy obſcurity. He ſat with his arms folded acroſs his breaſt, and his eyes fixed on the fire, revolving in his

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his mind the alarming circumſtances which had lately occurred, and the probability of the events they might denote, when a faint ſound on the oppoſite ſide of the apartment directed his eyes to the part from whence it proceeded, and he perceived a figure moving ſlowly acroſs the room, in which, though dimly revealed to his view, he fancied he diſcovered the reſemblance of the murdered Marquis. His blood congealed, yet his eyes eagerly traced the progreſs of the phantom, which ſoon was loſt in the remote gloom of the apartment. He was ſoon arouſed from the ſtupefaction of horror into which he was thrown by ſo ſtrange an incident, by a gentle knock at his door. The hope of ſeeing ſome living creature revived his ſpirits; he ſpoke, and Ignatius entered.

"You will forgive this intruſion," ſaid he. "When I retired to my chamber, I experienced ſuch a violent depreſſion of ſpirits, ſuch an unaccountable preſentiment of horror, as allowed me not to think of reſt.

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reſt. I had neglected to provide myſelf a night-lamp, and the gloom of my imagination rendered the idea of the darkneſs and ſolitude of midnight inſupportable. I therefore quitted my apartment in queſt of a lamp, and perceiving that there was ſtill light in your's as I paſſed it, I conjectured your feelings might be ſimilar to my own, and wiſhed to ſee you."

The Baron, without replying, pointed to a ſeat on the oppoſite ſide of the fire.

"I believe I have not been miſtaken—you appear to be alarmed!" ſaid the Monk, reading his conſternation in his countenance.

The Baron made no reply. The Monk ſeated himſelf.

"What mere machines we are!" ſaid the Monk, ſhuddering as he ſpoke; "this oppreſſive horror is no more than a nervous affection:

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affection: hurt but one little ſpring, and the mechaniſm of the whole ſyſtem is diſarranged. How unaccountable is this ſympathy between the mind and the body—a ſympathy which is felt more intimately in proportion as the latter verges to its decline. The young Marquis, doubtleſs, at this moment enjoys profound repoſe, whilſt the *manes* of his murdered brother remains unappeaſed, and ſeems to call for vengeance!"

"Have you then ſeen him?" cried the Baron, ſtaring wildly at Ignatius.

"No, not ſince he quitted the ſaloon."

"You ſpeak of the young De Courcy?"

"Who elſe could I have ſeen, my Lord?"

The Baron again ſunk into thought, diſturbed and confuſed by the circumſtance he had witneſſed, and ſometimes revolving the poſſibility of its being the mere creature of perverted imagination.

"I cannot avoid thinking," reſumed Ignatius, "that the exertions of the young Marquis

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Marquis to discover the perpetrators of the bloody deed have been less efficient than a circumstance so shocking to fraternal affection, if fraternal affection had existed, required them to be."

"The young Marquis was deeply affected by that tragical event," said the Baron.

"Doubtless," replied Ignatius, "but his affliction admitted of very sudden consolation. For that his violent passion for your lovely Eglantine may easily account. Human nature in its happiest state is imperfect. It is, perhaps, scarcely to be expected that a youth so impetuous in his passions should very sincerely lament the death of a brother whom, as he must have considered him as doubly his competitor in fortune and in love, it might have been a kind of negative merit in him not to hate.

"But methinks, my Lord, it should be your province to instigate the young Marquis to the adoption of such coercive means as may drag to the tribunal of justice the murderers of his brother; for much shall

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ſhall my judgment be deceived, if this troubled manſion ever know repoſe till Heaven has wreaked its vengeance on the guilty!"

CHAP. XXIV.

"It will have blood they ſay;—blood will have blood!"

SHAKESPEARE.

THE Baron heard a ſound which he imagined reſembled a repreſſed groan: he darted his looks to that part of the chamber where he had before ſeen the phantom, but perceived no uncommon object.

"Did you not hear a ſound?" ſaid he to the Monk.

"Nothing but the murmuring of the wind!"

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wind!" ſaid Ignatius careleſsly.—"The crime of murder," he reſumed, "is in its nature ſo flagitious!"

"Hold, hold!" cried the Baron, whoſe ears were again aſſailed by the ſame ſound. He threw a terrified glance to the farther end of the apartment, and imperfectly obſerved the horrid object of his fears, which ſtood motionleſs, and half involved in the darkneſs of the ſhade.

"See, ſee!" he exclaimed, ſtaring wildly as he pointed at the object of his terror.

"What?" ſaid the Monk, turning to look; "I ſee no uncommon object! This is the working of imagination."

"Merciful Father! Holy Virgin!" ejaculated the Baron, devoutly croſſing his breaſt, "Powers of Light and Goodneſs, ſave and defend us! Ha! it advances!"

The Monk, ſtarting from his ſeat, and ſtanding beſide the Baron, perceived the figure, which ſlowly approached them. As it advanced towards the light, the form of the departed Marquis became leſs dubiouſly revealed.

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revealed. He was habited as Godfrey had deſcribed him, in the clothes he wore on the day when the horrid tragedy had been acted; the mortal gaſh appeared freſh and bleeding in his forehead, his hair was clotted with blood, but his features, though their expreſſion was ſtern and ghaſtly, remained unaltered.

A cold ſweat bedewed the ſhuddering limbs of the Baron as he gazed on the ſpectre, who ſtood ſurveying him with a countenance of ſtern ſeverity.

"Speak to it, Father!" ſaid the Baron to Ignatius, who ſtood trembling at his ſide.

"If thou be the ſpirit of the murdered Marquis," ſaid Ignatius in the awe-ſtruck tone of ſolemn reverence, "I adjure thee, in the name of every holy Power, to declare the purpoſe of this terrible viſitation, and if thou require aught for the repoſe of thy troubled ſpirit, name, Oh name it!"

"Vengeance!" ſaid the ſpectre, in a voice that vibrated to the heart of the Baron; for

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for, though deep and hollow, it was that of the murdered Marquis.

"Vengeance! On whom?" enquired Ignatius.

"On my murderer!—my brother!"

"Your brother! What, on De Courcy?"

"On De Courcy!" repeated the phantom."

"De Courcy!" exclaimed the Baron; "Almighty Powers! can this be real?—De Courcy your murderer!"

"De Courcy is my murderer!" repeated the ghaſtly phantom.

"The myſtery of horror unravels," ſaid the Monk; "but what proof of his guilt?"

"Search—ſearch!" cried the ſpectre. "Heaven will have vengeance—vengeance!"

The attention of the Monk was called off by the ſituation of the Baron, who was ſinking to the floor, overcome by the horror of the dreadful revelation, when he again turned his eyes around in ſearch of the ſpectre. It was no longer to be ſeen. He rung violently for aſſiſtance, and ſome domeſtics,

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domeſtics, whom terror had kept waking, ſoon came to his aid.

The means uſed for the recovery of the Baron were ſoon effectual. He diſmiſſed his attendants, with directions to wait in the antichamber, and called Ignatius to his bedſide.

"My mind," ſaid the Baron, "is all confuſion, perplexity, and horror. When I revolve the dreadful circumſtance that has been diſcloſed to us, I doubt whether I ought to deem it a revelation from heaven, or an illuſion from hell! That De Courcy ſo young, ſo generous, ſo apparently noble, can have been the author of a crime ſo black—a deed ſo helliſh!—my reaſon almoſt refuſes its aſſent to a ſuppoſition which ſeems injurious to human nature!"

"The magnitude of the crime might indeed do away its probability," returned the Monk; "but, alas! the black chronicles of human depravity afford too many parallel inſtances of iniquity, to allow us to diſpute its

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its poſſibility. To a crime of this nature no ſtronger incitements could poſſibly be held out, than thoſe which conſpired to inſtigate this wretched youth to the commiſſion of this atrocious deed. Headſtrong, ardent, and aſpiring, diſſatisfied with the portion of a younger brother, intoxicated with ambition, infatuated with love, ſome fiend ſuggeſted to his mind that by one blow he might remove every impediment to the aggrandizement of his fortunes—every obſtacle to the gratification of his ſofter wiſhes. His virtue yielded to the powerful temptation—that guilty blow was ſtruck!

"Do you not recollect hearing of his wild perturbation on the day when his brother drove him from this Caſtle? In that conflict of his paſſions he poſſibly experienced the laſt ſtruggles of fraternal affection—of expiring humanity!

"How circumſtances now crowd on my memory which, in the ſimple reliance of unſuſpecting faith, paſſed unheeded! Can you have forgotten that the billet which

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allured the Marquis to his doom was in the writing of his brother?"

"But we ſuppoſed it to be a forged one."

"Yes, when aſſured of the integrity of young De Courcy, we naturally ſuppoſed ſo. There was another circumſtance which, though it ſtruck us as extraordinary, excited no ſuſpicion. When the murdered body was diſcovered, it was found that the gold and jewels remained untouched; this ſeemed to indicate that the blow had not been ſtruck by the hand of a mercenary aſſaſſin; nothing was wanting but the picture of Eglantine, which ſeemed to have been torn with violence from the breaſt."

"Theſe circumſtances undoubtedly appear ſuſpicious," ſaid the Baron; "but allowing that, to our own conviction, the guilt of De Courcy were even incontrovertibly aſcertained, how can we attempt to prove it to others? The power of puniſhment reſts not in our hands, and the reported evidence of a ſupernatural accuſer will have little weight with the Judges who will pronounce his ſentence; undoubtedly they will require

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require ſtronger proof to ſubſtantiate his delinquency than any we have to offer."

"We muſt ſearch for thoſe proofs," ſaid Ignatius; "the apparition commanded it."

"How—where are we to ſearch?"

"Our proceedings muſt be ſanctioned by legal authority," replied the Monk. "De Courcy has effects beneath this roof; poſſibly, if his papers were examined, ſome unexpected light might be thrown on the obſcurity of this dark and dreadful tranſaction."

"But if no ſuch light ſhould be found," returned the Baron; "if, after violating the hoſpitable protection this manſion ſhould afford him, expoſing his ſecret tranſactions to the inſpection of ſtrangers, and ſtigmatizing his character with an imputation ſo horrid, no confirmation of his culpability ſhould be found, how could I ſupport the indignation of his injured honour, the reproaches of my own heart, and the contempt of mankind?"

"Better incur the eventual contempt of men," ſaid the Monk, "than provoke the

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certain wrath of Heaven, by treating with voluntary diſregard the revelations it has deigned to impart. The ſpirit of the Marquis commanded you to ſearch for proofs of guilt, and where can you expect to find them but amongſt the effects of his murderer?"

"Search—ſearch!" exclaimed the ſame deep and hollow voice. The Baron caſt a fearful glance towards the end of the chamber, and ſaw the ghaſtly ſpectre. Raiſing its right hand, it pointed to the deep wound on its forehead, then diſappeared in the ſurrounding gloom.

The Baron, uttering a deep groan, cloſed his eyes, and ſunk backwards on his pillow.

"The will of Heaven be done!" he exclaimed; "but Oh that its wiſdom had appointed to ſome other this dreadful deputation! Oh my Eglantine—my loſt unhappy child! and is De Courcy then a murderer?" he exclaimed, with a ſtare of wild

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wild aſtoniſhment, "and have we cheriſhed with fond reliance a traitor guilty of the fouleſt treachery—foſtered in our boſoms an aſp replete with venom? Oh Eglantine! my wretched child!

"But, Father, your equanimity is ſuperior to this weak infirmity; unruffled by theſe deſtructive guſts of paſſion, you poſſeſs your ſoul in holy compoſure. To your wiſdom I refer the conduct of this fatal tranſaction; adopt what meaſures your ſuperior judgment and the inſpiration of Heaven may ſuggeſt."

"Where Providence ſo plainly manifeſts its intentions," ſaid the Monk, "no peculiar illumination is requiſite to direct us in a way that lies too diſtinct to be miſſed. The occurrences of this night muſt be immediately diſcloſed to a magiſtrate; the effects of the murderer muſt be ſearched even whilſt unconſcious of the meditated blow, and unprepared to avert it by new ſubterfuge. He ſleeps in guilty ſecurity beneath this violated roof."

"Let it be done then," ſaid the Baron,

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faintly. "Yet why this haſte? Oh Eglantine! how wilt thou ſupport this terrible ſtroke? Will it not cruſh thee like a tender bloſſom to the earth? De Courcy—my favourite—my ſon! Oh Father! who ſhall we truſt? Is virtue but a name—a phantom?"

The Monk attempted to calm the perturbation of his ſoul with pious conſolation. He remained with him till the morning bluſhed in the eaſt; then once more exhorting him to holy reſignation, departed on his miſſion.

Whilſt the heedleſs happy lovers, unconſcious of impending calamity, had loſt all ſenſe of ſorrow in that laſt delightful reciprocation of ſympathy and love, the baggage of De Courcy had been examined by a commiſſary. Amongſt his papers was found a rough copy of the billet by which the Marquis had been enticed to meet his murderer; and in another of his trunks was

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was discovered a small casket secured by a lock of a strong and singular construction, in which, when with difficulty forced open, was found the fatal picture which had been torn from the bosom of the Marquis on the day of his tragical decease.

CHAP. XXV.

WHEN Eglantine found herself in the Castle, whither she had been conveyed by Ignatius, starting with sudden energy from her trance of insensibility, she flew with frantic wildness to the apartment of the Baron, and falling on her knees at his feet, with the incoherent eloquence of impassioned grief and indignation, demanded the libera-

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tion of De Courcy, and the chaſtiſement of thoſe who had inſulted him.

Ignatius, with Iſabelle, Godfrey, and others of the houſehold, terrified by her emotion, had followed her diſtracted ſteps.

"And chiefly," ſhe exclaimed, turning with fierce reſentment to Ignatius, "chiefly I require you to chaſtiſe the inſolence of this Monk, who has dared to lead the band of ruffians, and charge him with the perpetration of a brother's murder!"

The Baron groaned, and averted his eyes from Eglantine.

"Young lady," replied the Monk with dignified compoſure, "what Heaven commands, I dare to do!"

"Heaven!" repeated Eglantine, "profane not its awful name! The tongue that accuſes De Courcy of a foul unnatural crime, blaſphemes the holieſt attribute of Heaven—

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Heaven—its immortal ſacred truth! Oh my father!" paſſionately claſping the knees of the Baron, "Oh my father! will you then ſuffer the nobleſt of mankind to be thus inſulted—thus traduced?"

The Baron claſped Eglantine with fond but bitter emotion to his boſom; his tears rolled down his furrowed cheeks, and fell in ſhowers on her face and boſom.

"Why this emotion—theſe tears, my father? Surely your authority can liberate De Courcy?"

"It was by the Baron's command he was arreſted!" ſaid Ignatius.

Eglantine ſhrunk from the Baron's embrace, and looked earneſtly in his face, as if expecting him to contradict the Monk's aſſertion.

"Alas, my child!" ſaid the Baron faintly, "we muſt yield obedience to the commands of Heaven!—Father, explain to her this

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terrible myſtery!—But let me retire—my fortitude is inadequate to ſuch ſcenes as theſe!"

The Baron withdrew, whilſt Eglantine ſtood with her eyes fixed on the Monk in breathleſs expectation.

The Monk, with evident diſtreſs and reluctance, repeated the circumſtances of the preceding night; whilſt Eglantine, as if petrified by aſtoniſhment, liſtened in ſilence to him. Godfrey could ſcarcely repreſs his emotions, which, at the concluſion of his relation, burſt forth in indignant exclamation.

"And is this the evidence on which my Lord is to be condemned? That phantom is an infernal liar, and were he this moment to appear before me, I would tell him ſo to his beard! Be ſatisfied, Mademoiſelle; my Lord is ſafe, and will be honourably acquitted; the Judges commiſſioned to try his

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his cauſe, will be neither Prieſts nor nurſes; nor is it to be feared that the helliſh ſprite that defames him, will exhibit its accuſations before the tribunal of juſtice!"

"Alas! it need not," returned the Monk; "more than ſufficient proof will be found without its teſtimony. But can you, to whom the ſpirit of the murdered Marquis deigned to become diſtinctly manifeſt, can you thus impiouſly queſtion the authenticity of the evidence it aroſe from the depth of the grave to unfold?"

"I muſt believe it aroſe from the depth of hell, whatever ſemblance it might aſſume—that it came deputed by the father of lies, a meſſenger of diabolical falſehood, if it came to criminate the virtues of the good, to fix the ſtamp of guilt on the innocent actions of the true and noble!"

"And why diſpute it?" ſaid Iſabelle. "If apparitions return from the grave, may they not be called up by ſome helliſh necromantic arts? The Witch of Endor ſummoned the ſleeping ſhade of Samuel."

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"Beware, profane one!" ſaid the Monk, aſſuming an impoſing ſolemnity of demeanour, "beware how you inſult the dignity of Heaven—beware how you provoke its awful thunders!"

"Such as are delegated to the hands of the prieſthood," returned Iſabelle contemptuouſly, "I heartily deſpiſe; but from its avenging thunders let thoſe ſhelter their own heads who preſume to threaten others."

"Where is now the infernal accuſer?" ſaid Godfrey, wildly looking around him. "Theſe are the apartments he haunted in the gloom of night; but the accurſed impoſtor now hides in his native hell, nor dares to utter his infamous accuſations in the glorious face of day!"

"Thinkeſt thou, vain boaſter!" returned the Monk, "that thy impious bravado can awake the ſleeping dead? The Accuſing Spirit has performed its commiſſion—the deſtined malefactor will be led from chains to death—divine juſtice will be appeaſed—the troubled ghoſt will henceforth reſt in peace!"

"No,"

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"No," said Godfrey, "it will roll in eternal fires—the damnedeſt portion of that gulph where all is damned ſhall be its everlaſting inheritance! But I rave:—it was a phantom raiſed by diabolical witchery; unſuſceptible and unſubſtantial as the forms we trace in the clouds, though endued, by magical deception, with voice and form!"

"It would be difficult to conceive," ſaid the Monk, "for what purpoſe the powers of magic, could we even allow their exiſtence, ſhould direct their infernal mechaniſm againſt the peace and honour of the Marquis."

"It would be ſtill more difficult to believe," ſaid Godfrey, "that the ſoul of a good man could return from the inviſible world to promulgate a diabolical falſehood!"

"No more of this vain contentious babbling," ſaid the Monk; "the piercing eye of Juſtice will inveſtigate the truth, and her impartial hand deal puniſhment adequate to the offence!"

"Juſtice!" repeated Godfrey; "ah! how often

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often is ſhe blindfolded by the ſubterfuges of the deſigning—how often does her erring hand confer the wreath of honour where it ought to raiſe the ſcorpion rod of ignominious chaſtiſement, and pour on the head of the innocent that vial of vengeance which ſhould expiate the crimes of the guilty!—But the honour of my Lord will yet triumph over the malice of his enemies, though, doubtleſs, the ſame inviſible hand which pierced the boſom of his brother, has ſpread this fiendlike ſnare to encompaſs him!"

CHAP.

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CHAP. XXVI.

" Speechleſs, and fix'd in all the death of woe:
" So faint reſemblance, on the marble tomb,
" The well-diſſembled mourner ſtooping ſtands
" For ever ſilent, and for ever ſad!"

" BUT you," exclaimed Iſabelle, turning to Eglantine, who ſtood ſilent, motionleſs, and inattentive to every thing around her, and claſping her in her arms, " you, lovely and innocent ſufferer, who ſhall conſole you under a calamity ſo heavy? What angel ſhall ſpeak peace to your agonized boſom?— Godfrey, let Father Francis be ſummoned. Oh, were all his boaſtful brethren like that holy man, then, indeed, almoſt might they perſuade

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perſuade us that to them had been delegated by Heaven the power of forgiving our ſins, as well as of ſoftening our calamities."

Eglantine ſuffered herſelf to be led to her apartment, where for ſome time her predominant ſenſation was an indiſtinct conſciouſneſs of extreme miſery.

What avails it to repreſent to the eye of ſenſibility the painful picture of the ſufferings of this gentle mind when returning recollection brought to her view the full magnitude of her calamity? Let us paſs her diſmal days, her ſleepleſs agonized nights, the wild ravings of her half-diſtracted ſpirit, the tender ſympathy and pious conſolations of her compaſſionate Confeſſor, and the inceſſant tears—the fond complaints of the faithful Iſabelle.

Iſabelle had now another powerful motive of affliction; for Godfrey was thrown into

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priſon on ſuſpicion of being acceſſary to the crime of his Lord.

We alſo forbear to delineate the feelings of De Courcy when, hurled, with tremendous precipitancy, from the proudeſt altitude of human proſperity, he found himſelf the deſpiſed, deſerted inhabitant of a deſolate dungeon. Too many are the tragical details which the connection of this ſingular and eventful hiſtory requires us to repeat. Abridging, therefore, all ſuch as do not form the neceſſary links of its chain, we haſten to the intereſting period when the time, allowed the Marquis to prepare for his trial, was expired.

He was not without friends who would have exerted themſelves ſtrenuouſly in his behalf; but in a caſe of this criminal nature the exertions of friends could avail but little: his vindication was to reſt on the proofs he might be able to exhibit of his own innocence.

Thoſe

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Thoſe who are acquainted with the ancient judicature of France, know how criminal proceſſes were conducted in that country at a period much later than that which we revert to. Not, as in ſome other kingdoms, were the proofs exhibited to ſubſtantiate the guilt, or to vindicate the innocence of the accuſed, made manifeſt to the eyes of the world in an open Court, where every unconcerned ſpectator was at liberty to arraign the juſtice of the deciſion to which he had liſtened through curioſity—not on the unperverted judgment of honeſt and unbiaſſed men, choſen with the approbation of the priſoner, depended this deciſion. Such might have been the glorious privileges of the citizens of other countries, but in France the criminal was dragged to ſecret trial; the power of life and death lay in the breaſts of Judges, often violating the conviction of their reaſon through partial or mercenary motives, and as often yielding it to the equally pernicious ſway of ignorance or caprice.

Such

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Such was the tribunal before which the Marquis De Courcy was, on the appointed day of trial, ſummoned to appear.

The Baron was neceſſitated to ſubmit to the dreadful office of appearing in a Court of Juſtice to evidence the guilt of a man whom he had regarded as a ſon, and cheriſhed as the friend moſt worthy to renew the ancient honours of his houſe, and be the protector of his darling child. Whilſt with painful and tremulous heſitation he repeated the awful circumſtances he had been ſummoned to declare, De Courcy, laden with fetters, ſtood with undaunted mien before him, like a young lion in the toils. During the aſtoniſhing relation, he fixed his ſteady penetrating eye, which expreſſed no paſſion but amazement on the Baron, who, when his evidence was concluded, unable to endure the glances of him of whom he involuntarily became the accuſer, was carried almoſt ſwooning from the Court.

The

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The Monk Ignatius was next called on to ſpeak. His evidence was ſhort, and in repeating it he ſeemed to ſelect the moſt ſoftening terms. He ſimply corroborated the facts already ſtated by the Baron.

Godfrey was next examined. He clearly proved the appearance of a phantom reſembling his murdered Lord; but ſtill ſtrenuouſly aſſerted the innocence of the accuſed, and declared his poſitive conviction that ſome myſterious necromantic deluſion had been practiſed.

CHAP.

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CHAP. XXVII.

THE evidence which went to prove the probability of the fact was next examined, and this was principally brought forward by Father Hugo, whose exaggerated representation of the dissension of the noble brothers had formerly been so displeasing to the deceased Marquis.

The violent passion entertained by Albert De Courcy for the destined bride of his brother,—the loud and threatening language he had addressed to him on the night previous to his departure from Gascony—his interview

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interview with Eglantine on the following morning—the ardent ſolicitations he addreſſed to her to conſent to an elopement, (fully proved by that domeſtic who had ſecretly followed his ſteps in the intention of preventing a duel between the brothers, and who, concealed by the thick foliage of the foreſt, had overheard his converſation with Eglantine, and his ſubſequent angry conteſt with the Marquis)—the violent perturbation of mind in which he departed, and the note in his hand-writing, by which the Marquis had been allured to his deſtruction, was next produced, and compared with its counterpart, found amongſt his papers; and when to this body of evidence was ſuperadded the ſtrongly impreſſive fact that the picture of Eglantine, torn from the boſom of the murdered Marquis, had been diſcovered carefully concealed amongſt his effects, it was not wonderful that in an age when the belief of ſupernatural agency was almoſt univerſally prevalent, the proofs of De Courcy's

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Courcy's guilt ſhould appear incontrovertible and concluſive.

One of the Judges, influenced by the noble mien, the undaunted magnanimity of De Courcy, ventured to inſinuate a poſſibility that the writings might have been forged, and the picture mingled with his effects by the fraudful contrivance of a concealed enemy.

To this it was anſwered that the weight of evidence which went to prove the reality of the imputed crime, brought with it a conviction ſo clear and perfect as could only be annihilated by the admiſſion of the improbable conjecture that all the proofs exhibited againſt De Courcy had been the work of necromancy; it was added that, black as was the crime imputed to the Marquis, the dark and diſmal hiſtory of the human heart teemed with precedents to eſtabliſh its probability.

How

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How often had the dire crime of murder been perpetrated when the commiſſion of the heinous fact had been urged by motives trivial and incompetent in compariſon with thoſe which had apparently raiſed the hand of De Courcy againſt the life of his brother—that brother doubly his rival in ambition and in love—love the moſt furious and exaſperating of human paſſions, which had not only ſacrificed innumerable victims to its deſtructive rage, but frequently violated the firſt dread command of nature, and with maniac deſperation, terminated the exiſtence that ſuſtained it!

CHAP.

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CHAP. XXVIII.

" Thou Searcher of men's hearts,
" And ſure Defender of the innocent,
" If I in this am guilty, ſtrike me dead;
" Or by ſome unexpected means confirm,
" I am accuſed unjuſtly!"

WHEN De Courcy was called on to make a defence againſt charges ſo heavy and multiplied, he anſwered, with calm and noble intrepidity, that he was conſcious he had none to make which could appear ſatisfactory.

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To part of the charge he voluntarily pleaded guilty, if there was guilt in feeling, even during the life of his brother, an impaſſioned tenderneſs for the heireſs of Berezule; avowing that, conceiving he had reaſon to imagine this tenderneſs was mutual, he would have reſcued the object of his fond affection from an union to which filial duty alone would have induced her to ſubmit, and borne her to ſome happier region where their love might have found an honourable ſanction, and a ſafe aſylum; but that when Eglantine, with the dignity which belonged to the purity of her character, not only rejected, but reſented the propoſition, he yielded without a murmur to the mandate that deſtroyed the aſpiring hopes, of which the preſumption had been but momentary, and in the ſolemn purpoſe of his ſoul, had inflicted on himſelf the voluntary penance of an eternal exile from her preſence.

After his departure from Gaſcony, he added, he had remained but a few days with his

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his regiment; that reſtleſſneſs of ſpirit, incident to violent perturbation of mind, having prompted him to wander in vain purſuit of a mitigation of his ſufferings, to which he was doubly incited by a wiſh to conceal them from the obſervation of his aſſociates. Determined to remove to ſome Alpine ſolitude, where no prying eye might witneſs the agonized tumults of his exacerbated ſpirit, Godfrey, the only confidant of his ſorrows or of his intentions, had accompanied him to Savoy. When there, he fancied that to purſue his journey into Italy might produce a temporary ſuſpenſion of his corroding ſorrows. In this intention he had ſent Godfrey back to his regiment for farther leave of abſence, and a ſupply of money to enable him to execute his meditated project.

"I mention theſe circumſtances," continued De Courcy, "to exculpate my faithful ſecretary from the black ſuſpicion which has attached to him of being a participator in a crime of which a ſeries of aſtoniſhing and fatally concurring circumſtances have con-

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ſpired to ſtamp me guilty. I ſee, I feel that my exiſtence is devoted to deſtruction, and my name to obloquy; but, fortunately, the innocence of Godfrey can be eaſily aſcertained, for it can be indubitably proved that on the day which ſo fatally terminated my brother's life, he was with the regiment, engaged in the buſineſs I had deputed him to tranſact. In reſpect to myſelf, a train of unfortunate circumſtances would render it impoſſible to prove an *alibi*.—Can I expect others to remember what I have myſelf forgotten—the places where I ſpent that ſadly memorable day, and thoſe which preceded and followed it? I only recollect that they were paſſed in the ſolitudes of Savoy, where the hard rocks were my pillows, and the pines which waved over them, my only ſhelter from the nocturnal dews. Thus I ſpent thoſe melancholy days and nights, except when exhauſted by hunger, I caſually viſited the huts of the peaſants, ſome of whom might poſſibly recollect having ſeen ſuch a man; but could it be expected that they correctly noted when the fugitive viſit had

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had been made?—a circumſtance of ſuch common occurrence as that of an obſcure traveller having ſtopped to require refreſhment at their cottages."

He could indeed, he continued, authenticate that having found himſelf ſeized with a feveriſh attack, he had applied for relief to a Convent of Ciſtercian Monks, who had hoſpitably received him, and watched the ſymptoms of his malady with paternal benevolence and Chriſtian charity; but, unfortunately, between the time of his brother's deceaſe, and that of his admiſſion into the Convent, an interval of ſufficient length had elapſed to have allowed the perpetrator of the murder to have reached the Convent even on an earlier day than that on which he firſt had entered it; neither could his abſence from Gaſcony, had he the power of proving it, avail in eſtabliſhing the conviction of his innocence, as he might have reached the heart of his brother by the hand of a hired aſſaſſin.

"The incomprehenſible and ſtrange circumſtances

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cumſtances which have conſpired to ſtigmatize me with the imputation of an odious and unnatural crime," continued De Courcy, "excite my aſtoniſhment, but provoke not my reſentment; for againſt whom could my reſentment be levelled but that ſupernatural accuſer, whoſe falſe aſſeverations have drawn on my innocent head this tremendous weight of unexampled calamity?—If I fall by fraudful artifice, who can I (who never had an enemy) ſuſpect of practiſing it? To the apparent heirs of my poſſeſſions no ſuſpicion can attach, for by my ignominious fate my poſſeſſions will be forfeited to the crown. To no human being can I attribute the guilt of my unjuſt condemnation and untimely fate. Some hand inviſible points the thunder which ſtrikes my devoted head; if it come from hell, the fiends poſſeſs no power which is not delegated to them from on high: as the puniſhment, then, of ſome unrepented unſuſpected crime, I bow in humility to the awful diſpenſation!

"Judges of men! your wiſdom cannot penetrate

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penetrate the receſſes of the human heart. From circumſtances you muſt decide; theſe conſpire to prove me guilty: the laws demand their victim! Haſte then—pronounce my ſentence; I am prepared to hear, and willing to yield obedience to it!"

The youth, the misfortune, the noble candour, the undaunted firmneſs of De Courcy impreſſed the hearts of ſome of the ſpectators with a ſtrong internal evidence of his innocence: amongſt theſe was the compaſſionate Judge, who had already ſpoken, and again ſuggeſted new arguments in his favour.

But they were overruled; the decree was pronounced—De Courcy was ſentenced to be broken on the wheel!

He heard the ſentence with unvarying intrepidity.

"Judges," ſaid he, "you have decreed according to your ſenſe of right, and your

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decree is consequently equitable; yet some prophetic instinct whispers to my heart, that when the spirit of him whom ye now condemn to ignominious torture, shall repose in the pure peace of the virtuous, your souls shall be lacerated by the remembered proceedings of this day—that you will vainly wish to obliterate them by tears from the bloody register that records them!"

De Courcy turned with impressive dignity as he spoke, and followed the jailers, who waited to reconduct him to his dungeon, where, in the character of a condemned malefactor, he was laden with still stronger bonds and heavier fetters.

The Monk Ignatius, much agitated by this scene, was led from the Court, whilst the Judges seemed fixed in silent consternation, and appeared by their looks of horror to upbraid each other with the condemnation of the innocent—with having uttered an unjust decree which none dared to revoke.

Such

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Such were the proceedings of this fatal day; and let thoſe in whoſe minds they raiſe aſtoniſhment, or provoke incredulity, recollect the perverſion of human reaſon at the period when they took place—let them peruſe the ſanguinary catalogues of the innocent victims of ſuperſtition who, in the moſt enlightened nations of the earth, were condemned to the ſtake for the ridiculous imputation of the imaginary crime of witchcraft, at eras more recent than that we now look back to. The acquittal of De Courcy would have been more ſurpriſing than his condemnation if, under ſuch circumſtances, it had been pronounced by men whoſe minds were deeply tinctured with the prevalent ſuperſtitions of the age they lived in, and to whoſe apprehenſions to doubt the return of the dead would have appeared a culpable ſpecies of infidelity—an approach to Atheiſm.

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CHAP. XXIX.

"Altri nodi amor promise!"

DE COURCY was remanded to prison. When he recovered sufficient freedom of thought to become conscious of his situation, he perceived that he was seated at the foot of a stone pillar, to which he was bound by heavy iron chains. No sigh escaped his bosom, no tear moistened his burning eye-balls as he rolled them wildly around on the dark damp walls of his dungeon, made visible by a few rays of sullen light that faintly entered through a small iron grate fixed in the

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the center of the maſſy door. His wandering looks faſtened on this object.

"Oh light!—Oh liberty!" he exclaimed, "are ye then loſt to me for ever?—But what are ye?——Oh Eglantine! dearer than life, than liberty, than glory!—Powers of mercy! are theſe things ſo—and am I the ſame De Courcy of late ſo high in honour, ſo cheriſhed, ſo beloved—beloved by Eglantine!—now perhaps deteſted, dreaded, ſcorned!"

The key turned, the heavy bolts began to move, the door ſlowly opened. A perſon entered: it was Francis, the good Monk, who, ruſhing to De Courcy, threw his arms around his neck, and burſt into tears.

"Oh Father! is it thus you teach me reſignation?" cried De Courcy.

"Alas, my ſon! I preſume not to preach to you that virtue I ſo greatly require myſelf. I thought this careworn breaſt had

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renounced all human ties, abjured all human paſſions; but I ſtill feel them rankling in my heart!—Forgive me, Heaven!—almoſt could I curſe the Judges who have pronounced the unjuſt decree!——Oh my Eglantine—my loſt unhappy child!"

"Aye, there, there!" cried De Courcy, gnaſhing his teeth, and ſtriking his fettered hands together, "there lies the deadly ſting that poiſons the ſource of life!—Oh this burning torture of my brain! Where is the fortitude with which ere while I raiſed my eyes to my accuſers—the magnanimity which, with prophetic denunciation of future penitence and remorſe, ſtruck terror to the ſouls of my Judges? Oh, ſpeak to me, Father! Where is that holy eloquence which, like the ſtrain of an angel, was wont to inſpire celeſtial confidence—celeſtial peace? Oh, ſpeak of the eternal manſions of repoſe prepared for ſuffering virtue—of the ſublime contempt with which the emancipated ſoul will look down on the earthly dungeon it has quitted—of triumphant palms—

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palms—of angelic harmony! Oh, call to my view the glories of the beatific vision—let its ſplendours ſhroud and eclipſe the intervening horrors—the tortuous wheel, the bloody executioner, the public ignominy!"

"Oh my ſon, my ſon! ſpare this burſting heart! I cannot now repeat moral lectures—the cold offspring of unimpaſſioned judgment;—my heart is torn—my brain is fevered! There is a time for all things—this is an hour to weep! For what did Heaven allot us tears, but to embalm the memory of what we love, to pour like lenient balſam over the wounds beyond our power to heal!"

"Oh venerable man!" cried De Courcy, "friend of the wretch, whoſe aſſuaſive drops of holy ſympathy allay the burning fever of my ſoul, ſoft and refreſhing as nocturnal dews to the ſun-ſtruck pilgrim!

"Father," ſaid De Courcy with more compoſure, after a pauſe, "if Eglantine believes me innocent, I ſhall die content!"

"Never

"Never could ſo black a doubt pollute that mind of angel purity."

"Then, Father, will you ſuffer me to write to Eglantine?"

"Yes, and I will be the bearer of your letter. To-night I will bring materials; I muſt quit you at preſent—my next viſit ſhall be longer."

"Go then, Father, but remember with what anxiety I ſhall expect your return."

The Monk punctually performed his promiſe, and the next morning conveyed to Eglantine the following letter, written by the fettered hand of De Courcy.

THE LETTER.

"Will the noble heireſs of Orival, ſo high in honour, ſo uncontaminate in purity, liſten to the ſighs of a condemned malefactor, breathed from the depth of the dungeon where,

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where, laden with chains and ignominy, he lies ſentenced to death for a crime at which humanity ſhudders?

"Oh Eglantine! to what a depth am I fallen! What are the tranſient glories of this world?—When late the ſun of fortune gilt me with meridian ſplendour, how little did I think it was ſo ſoon to ſet—to ſet in blood!

"Thus impreſſed with a ſad conviction of the vanity of earthly proſperity, ſupported by the conſolations of conſcious innocence, and ſecure of an acquittal before that Supreme Tribunal whoſe awful deciſions are ſtamped with the ſacred ſeal of unerring juſtice, methinks I could calmly await the terrors of approaching death, and endure the ſcorn and deteſtation of the deluded multitude.—But that Eglantine could for one moment believe me guilty!—Eglantine the partner of my heart—my promiſed bride!

"Memory with terrified amazement recals the late dreadful tranſactions!—The powers of hell ſeem to have conſpired the deſtruction

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deſtruction of a man who would have wiſhed to mitigate the ſufferings of its condemned inhabitants. Reaſon runs wild in the maze of improbable conjecture!

"Almighty Spirit! who pervadeſt the univerſe, thine eye alone can penetrate the dreadful myſtery, thy ſaving power can reſcue me from the toils which encompaſs me, or, if the inſcrutable counſels of unerring wiſdom have decreed me to fall, can inſpire me with fortitude and holy hope!

"Eglantine, I will not inſult our former affection by entreating you to believe me innocent: the purity of your own heart will anſwer for the rectitude of mine. Could that heart have devoted its ſpotleſs and fervent affection to a wretch capable of ſuch crimes as are alledged againſt me?—The ſacred inſtinct of her nature would have revolted againſt the union—ſome guardian ſaint or holy angel would have inſpired her to ſhrink with ſalutary horror from a murderer!

"Yet, Oh Eglantine! one paſſionate deſire

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predominates in my ſoul with reſtleſs perturbation—Oh might I hear from your own lips the avowed belief of my innocence! Methinks one tear of ſympathy would operate like healing balm on my heart—heal every wound of ſorrow—expunge every trace of affliction!

"Away, phantoms of interdicted felicity, that with inceſſant aſſiduity torture my feveriſh brain—Oh leave me to the ſad repoſe my fate may yet allow!—Eglantine, we meet no more!

"Yet why no more?—A hand inviſible—and let us revere the blow it has dealt—has torn the ſilver chain that bound our hearts in pure and holy union—ſundered on earth, but inviolate in Heaven! Beyond the dreary paſſage of the grave our liberated ſpirits ſhall reſume it with higher, holier rapture. To that hour, my Eglantine, direct your weeping eyes—liſten to the conſolations of the white-winged angel, Faith: ſhe will open to your view the ſerene manſions of the bleſſed—ſhe will ſhew the ſpirit of your

De

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De Courcy, in the holy enthuſiaſm of ſeraphic love, ſtill hovering around you, ſympathizing in your ſorrow, and participating in your joy.

"Yet write once more!—Let me read your repeated aſſurances of my innocence—let me preſs your laſt bleſſing to my dying lips!

"Adieu, Eglantine—adieu!—but not for ever!"

"Is this, Father," ſaid Eglantine, turning to the Monk, with a ſmile——Smiles are uſually the gentle offspring of innocence, of pleaſure, or of love, and give endearing graces to the countenances they animate; but there is a ſmile which expreſſes more gloomy deſperation, more agonized bitterneſs of ſoul than complainings, groans, and tears can evidence. Such was the ſmile worn by the features of Eglantine when, turning to the Monk, ſhe ſaid,

"Is this, Father, the conſolation you bring me? Smooth and ſoft is the language of this

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this letter, and ſmooth and ſoft the oil which, poured on a burning furnace, makes it blaze the fiercer!—De Courcy may ſpeak of conſolation—he may look to that Heaven whoſe glories are opening faſt upon him; but I, wretched, melancholy, widowed ſpectre! doomed to drag my heavy clanking chain through this miſerable ſepulchre of departed joy—of joy how bright—how exquiſite!—to groan beneath this terrible burden of exiſtence which, abhorring as I do, I muſt not, dare not terminate! Oh Father! how long can I bear all this? When, Oh when will ſubdued nature yield to theſe agonizing conflicts?

"To ſuffer for an imaginary crime—to be broken on the wheel like an infamous criminal!—Iſabelle, where are you?—Come near me—let me feel you—tell me do I wake—what does this mean?—Am I ill?—Are theſe horrible chimeras the black offſpring of delirious fancy?

"Oh! I am anſwered by your tears. Vainly—vainly would I lull my anguiſhed ſoul

ſoul to viſionary peace!—Oh this load that oppreſſes me! Throw open the caſements—I ſhall ſuffocate! Come, Iſabelle, come with me to the battlements!"

"The battlements, Mademoiſelle! You ſee how dark it is!"

"No matter:—what is light—what is darkneſs? Oh that it were dark for ever!"

With the precipitance of agonized feeling ſhe flew off as ſhe ſpoke. Iſabelle purſued her quick ſteps. The weeping Monk retired to pray for the mitigation of that diſtreſs his compaſſionate efforts had no power to alleviate.

CHAP.

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CHAP. XXX.

" Nocturnal dewdrops o'er the flowers
" A genial balm diffuſe;
" But ſofter to affliction's night
" Are Pity's holy dews!"

EARLY next day Father Francis, returning to Eglantine, found her more collected.

" Father," ſaid Eglantine, looking earneſtly at the Monk, " do you conceive my miſery?"

" I do, my child, and deeply compaſſionate it."

" If

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"If you compaſſionate, you will conſent to alleviate it."

"Would to Heaven I could!"

"You can," ſaid Eglantine with wild eagerneſs; "comparative peace, at leaſt, you can reſtore me! When you next viſit De Courcy, let me accompany you! Diſtract me not by a refuſal!" ſhe continued more wildly, obſerving him preparing to ſpeak; "I have inceſſantly revolved this project in my mind—I know it to be practicable—my laſt remaining hope of earthly peace hangs on it! To-night, when the family retire, I will meet you at the foreſt gate;—but a few miles ſeparate me from De Courcy; I can perform ſo ſhort a journey on horſeback—even on foot, methinks, I could perform it! You muſt prepare me a diſguiſe, under which you may without difficulty introduce me to De Courcy."

"My child, you know not the danger in which ſo wild a project might involve us!"

"Oh Father, fear nothing! ſome holy angel

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angel will protect you. What have you to fear?"

"On my own account little:—repeated ſtrokes of calamity have ſeared this boſom—but for you, my child, I fear much!"

"What have you to fear for me? Can I be more wretched than I already am? Oh Father!" laying her hand on her boſom, "if you could but feel what paſſes here! I read in your looks the reproaches your humanity repreſſes; they reprove the impatient anguiſh of my ſoul—they ſpeak the mild language of reaſon and religion; but their voice is drowned in this ſwell of impetuous paſſion. Had De Courcy died, I could have bedewed his honourable grave with the meek tears of reſignation, and received with humility the quiet conſolations of devotion; but now, Oh Father! what have I done to merit this dreadful chaſtiſement? I thought none but the guilty could undergo ſuch horrors! And will you refuſe to my deſpair the only means of alleviation Heaven has left it?—Oh let me ſee De Courcy!"

"And

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"And have you fortitude equal to the enterprise? Is there a person within these walls to whom you could prudently confide your design?"

"Yes, to Isabelle. Yet no—such confidence might injure her:—but I want not her assistance; only promise to await me at the forest gate."

"But can you brave those superstitious horrors," said the Monk, "which so lately appalled your imagination? As, in the silence and darkness of midnight, you traverse the deserted galleries and solitary courts, may not even the mournful murmurs of the wind sound to the ear of affrighted fancy as the groans of some supernatural being,—or some common object, partially discovered by the glimmering star-light, be transformed, by the magic of terrified imagination, into a horrid spectre? If in this dreary silence of midnight solitude, whilst remote from human assistance, your spirit should sink beneath those visionary terrors,

your

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your life or reaſon might become the victim of the fatal raſhneſs. If——"

"If," interrupted Eglantine wildly, "if you could conceive for a moment the anguiſh of my ſoul, you would ceaſe to torture it with theſe groundleſs apprehenſions! There was indeed a time when my timid ſpirit would have ſhrunk at the murmuring of the breeze—have been ſtartled at the ſcreaming of the owl; but it is now actuated by reſolution, inſpired with energy unfelt before. Unconſcious of guilt, I feel fearleſs of danger. What have I now to fear?—What form amongſt the eternal train could blaſt my view with ſuch horror as that of De Courcy, the inhabitant of a diſmal dungeon, chained to the earth like ſome atrocious criminal, condemned to death for murder—for the murder of a brother!"

"Horrible indeed!" ſaid the Monk, "too horrible I fear for your gentle ſpirit to ſupport!"

"Oh Father! do not trifle with my impatience, my deſpair! This dreadful idea

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is never abſent from my mind!—I ſee him now—in the gloom of night he haunts me: my ſlumbers, if I ſlumber, are broken by his groans—I ſtart in agonizing terror from my pillow—hurried on by ſome dreadful impulſe, I aſcend the battlements of the Caſtle! The diſmal gloom that overſpreads the creation—the hoarſe murmurs of the wind through the foreſt—the ſullen echoes of the daſhing waves ſeem to lull the tumults of my boſom. But I awake to new horrors from this tranſitory ſerenity. I caſt a wild and wiſtful glance on the troubled ocean; ſome demon whiſpers that my tortured ſoul might find repoſe in its deep boſom! I fling myſelf on my knees—I implore the aſſiſtance of every bleſſed ſaint and angel to enable me to ſubdue the dreadful impulſe:—yet, Oh! if, in the delirium of inſupportable affliction, Paſſion ſhould for a moment ſnatch the reins from Reaſon, and Frenzy perform a deed at which conſcience would ſtart with affrighted horror!—Oh Father! can you not catch the meaning of my ſoul?"

"My

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" My child, I do!" replied the Monk, collecting all of auſterity he could collect; " but ſuffer not your reaſon to be lulled to deceitful repoſe by the caſuiſtry of the paſſions; their's is the empire of choice, not of neceſſity: ſeldom do they hold the reins which reaſon was deſtined by the Almighty to poſſeſs, unleſs when voluntarily ſubmitted to their government by the caprice of human will. Few, perhaps, are the blameleſs victims of Frenzy; not that they impiouſly wooed the hideous fiend to ſhake the throne, and aſſume the ſceptre of Reaſon, but they have not reſiſted her approaches—they have nouriſhed thoſe fatal paſſions which have invited and confirmed her baleful ſway.—The wretched maniac may not be accountable for the horrors his frenzy may prompt him to commit; but his may be the earlier folly, and the ſin of ſuffering reaſon, that fair and radiant ſtar, whoſe ſacred illumination the Almighty ſent to guide us to himſelf, to be ſhorn of its heavenly beams—to be eclipſed by the black ſtorms of the tem-

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peſtuous paſſions! We are accountable for reaſon as for life to the All-hallowed Source of both;—for what is life without that better gift? Oh, then, my child, as you prize your preſent comfort and eternal peace, reſtrain theſe rebellious conflicts of your troubled ſoul—ſubmit your wiſhes to that unerring Wiſdom which, even at the moment when the blindneſs of human folly arraigns its diſpenſations, is ſecretly working for our good!"

"Oh Father! I ſtood on the brink of a precipice! You have plucked the bandage from my eyes! I ſee the gulph which yawned beneath me—yes, wretch that I was! I abhorred the reaſon, whoſe deteſted light ſerved but to ſhew the ſuperior horrors of my deſtiny!—Oh Heaven! I even wiſhed to relinquiſh it! and then ſoft glimpſes of a bleſſed oblivion ſeemed to beam on my mind; for, methought—but now I ſee the miſerable deception—methought the wild ravages of frenzy could not be imputed to me as guilt! Yet, Oh Father! they will return. I feel—

I feel

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I feel the terrible impulſes will return if you reject my ſupplication—if you will not ſuffer me to ſee De Courcy!"

"And will the reality of the viſionary ſcene," ſaid the Monk, "which ſo powerfully affects your imagination, contribute to reſtore the repoſe of reaſon and religion to your agitated breaſt?"

"Oh yes, yes!—let me but ſee De Courcy—let me but receive his vows of innocence—his laſt profeſſions of affection, and this fevered perturbation will yield to the ſilent ſerenity of grief!—A wild impatience agitates my ſpirits—my head burns—my tears have ceaſed to flow! You ſay De Courcy bears his fate with manly fortitude, with pious reſignation! Oh, then let his example inſtruct—his conſoling wiſdom ſooth me; and ſofter ſenſations will ſucceed to this horrible deſpondency—my tears will flow—tears of compaſſion for his fate, and of contrition for my own weakneſs!—Oh Father! are you ſtill irreſolute?"

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The Monk pauſed, till obſerving the wild expreſſion of deſpair which his heſitation lighted up in the countenance of Eglantine, and fearing leſt ſome dreadful cataſtrophe might be the reſult of his refuſal, he reluctantly yielded to the ardour of her entreaties, and promiſed to meet her at midnight at the foreſt gate.

CHAP. XXXI.

"Where light-heel'd ghoſts and viſionary ſhades
"Beneath the wan cold moon, as fame reports,
"Embody'd thick, perform their myſtic rounds."

STRANGE ſenſations of delight agitated the ſoul of Eglantine. Thoſe who attended her,

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her, wondered at the ſudden alteration, which they attributed to the pious conſolations of her good Confeſſor. The day was paſſed in thinking of her purpoſed plan, and deviſing means for its execution. She moſt feared the affectionate vigilance of Iſabelle, who ſlept in her chamber, and whom ſhe generouſly determined not to expoſe to the hazard of the Baron's or the Lady Geneviora's indignation, to which the diſcovery of her participation in ſuch a plan would certainly ſubject her. This inconvenience ſhe eluded by ordering an anodyne potion for herſelf, which ſhe eaſily contrived to mingle with the beverage prepared for Iſabelle, who thus enjoyed an involuntary reſpite from the affliction with which the fate of her miſtreſs, and that of her lover, alternately agonized her faithful heart.

As the hour deſtined for the accompliſhment of her plan approached, Eglantine anxiouſly watched the movements of the family. She heard the ſhutting of the gates,

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the ſhooting of the bolts, the laſt diſtant footſteps of the retiring domeſtics.

As the appointed hour advanced, her agitation increaſed—it was the agitation of hope; ſhe had no fear except that of being prevented in the execution of her plan, and of this ſhe foreſaw there was little probability.

The clock ſtruck twelve. She flung herſelf before the altar in her oratory ſacred to the Bleſſed Virgin, and with the fervid enthuſiaſm of a devotion not untinctured with ſuperſtition, and inflamed by the perturbation of an agonized ſpirit, entreated the favour and mediation of her holy Patroneſs, and beſought her to proſper the enterpriſe ſhe engaged in.

Riſing from her knees, ſhe felt as if armed with ſupernatural courage, which ſhe almoſt perſuaded herſelf to impute to the inſpiration of the divine mediatrix, whoſe protection ſhe had ſo earneſtly ſolicited; but

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but there is a fatal fortitude in deſpair, and it was this which ſhe experienced in all its energy.

She opened her caſemēnt :—all below was tranquil. The broad wan orb of the moon diſcernible at intervals through the thick black clouds, threw over the ſhadowy ſcene a feeble and interrupted luſtre, and the winds ſwept in ſhrill guſts, which died away in melancholy murmurs.

Wholly occupied by the purpoſe which engroſſed her ſoul, Eglantine deſcended with ſteady and cautious ſteps. Undaunted by ſilence and darkneſs, ſhe traverſed the long galleries and antique halls, ſo late the theatres where ſcenes of ſupernatural horror had been acted. All was wrapped in deathlike ſerenity and gloom—no hollow groan admoniſhed her to forbear—no ſpectre burſt its marble caſements to oppoſe her paſſage. Unappalled and unmoleſted, ſhe reached a ſmall poſtern gate of which ſhe had ſecured

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a key; she flew like lightning through the courts, and arrived at the gate where Father Francis had promised to attend her. She gave one stroke, the appointed signal; the Monk answered it with three on the outside. She opened it.

"Oh my child!" he exclaimed, "with what anxiety have I awaited you! How often have I censured my own blind indulgence to your wishes! Do you still persist in your intention?"

"Father, let us not waste time.—Hark! the dogs already give the alarm—their barking may awake the family. Haste—haste! give me your hand—you know the way!"

"It is narrow and difficult," said the Monk; "let me support you."

He had himself more occasion for the support he offered—he trembled with anxiety and apprehension; but her nerves were firm: the ardent impulses of her mind hurried her onwards, and the Monk could

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ſcarcely keep pace with the rapidity of her movements.

In their way the ruined burying-ground was to be croſſed, where the Marquis had been murdered. A phalanx of imaginary ſpectres guarded this interdicted ſpot:—the hind viewed it from afar with ſenſations of ſhuddering horror, and ſought a longer path, which wound amongſt the mountains, to his humble home. The ivy which mantled the ruined arch, formerly impeded in its growth, and torn by the hand of the careleſs paſſenger, now hung to the ground in luxuriant feſtoons, which the Monk was obliged to raiſe ere Eglantine could paſs beneath; whilſt the birds of night, ſhaken from their thick covert by the motion, flapped their heavy wings, and flew with diſmal ſcreamings around the heads of our nocturnal wanderers.

Eglantine's attention was arreſted:—ſhe ſtopped—ſhe pauſed—ſhe looked ſtedfaſtly

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on the ſpot where the murdered body had been found in the long thick graſs beſide the dilapidated tomb!

"Oh unfortunate brothers!" ſhe exclaimed, "ſoon will De Courcy be as cold—as lifeleſs! But he ſtill lives!—Oh Father! loſe no time!"

She again ſprang forwards, and the Monk purſued her rapid ſteps.

They now found themſelves on a wild barren heath, half covered with rocks, and overgrown with furze and brambles. Here Eglantine was obliged to follow the Monk, who, fearful of miſſing the narrow path which led to the Convent, where the plan he had adopted forced them to ſtop, was often obliged to turn and look around, and wait till the opening clouds allowed the faint beams of the moon to direct him in the doubtful way.

When

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When they arrived at an old blighted oak, that had alone withſtood the bleak and bitter blaſts which had levelled with the duſt its cotemporary brethren of the foreſt, the Monk ſtopped, and raiſing the ivy, which concealed a large hollow in its trunk, drew from thence the habit of a Monk of his own order, which he threw over Eglantine.

"This diſguiſe," ſaid he, drawing the long black cowl over her face, "ſhould you even be ſeen, will ſhield you from ſuſpicion. It is known that I often go out at night to adminiſter the holy rites of our Church to the ſick and dying, and it will be believed that you are one of the brethren whom I have brought to aſſiſt me in this pious office. Under this diſguiſe you will eaſily gain admiſſion to De Courcy, whoſe jailer I have prepared for our reception."

"Then De Courcy expects me?" ſaid Eglantine.

"No," ſaid the Monk, "I feared to apprize him of your intention, leſt ſome inevitable

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vitable obſtacle might prevent its execution. But we are now near the Convent, and it is neceſſary that I conceal you whilſt I ſeek the peaſant whom I have commiſſioned to provide us with horſes. I ſhall not be abſent more than a quarter of an hour:—would you fear to remain during that interval in the vaults of the Convent?"

"Father," returned Eglantine, "I have already told you I fear nothing. Methinks the awful repoſe which hovers over thoſe dark manſions of the dead, would mitigate the keenneſs of my ſenſations. The diſmal gloom of the ſepulchral vault is more congenial with my feelings, more ſoothing to my affliction, than the gay ſaloon whoſe radiant illuminations would inſult the deep deſpondency of my ſoul."

"You are right, my child; amongſt theſe awful monuments of mouldering mortality there is much advantage to be reaped, and no evil to be dreaded.—Ah, would to Heaven the habitations of the living were as ſafe!"

CHAP.

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CHAP. XXXII.

" 'Midſt ſculls and coffins, epitaphs and worms!"

THEY had now deſcended to the deep glen in which the Convent was ſituated. They entered the court, and paſſed from thence to the cloiſters. All the fraternity ſeemed at reſt; not a ſound was heard but the wind murmuring through the branches of a gigantic yew, which, growing in the midſt, completely canopied the cloiſters with its dark green foliage. The Monk, opening a low gate which led to the vault, bade Eglantine enter; and taking her hand, for the darkneſs was total, conducted her

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her to a tomb, and again admoniſhing her to ſupport her ſpirits, left her, and faſtened the door after him.

Eglantine, alone in this melancholy depoſitory, felt that her fortitude did not forſake her. As ſhe leaned on the tomb, ſhe felt ſomething beneath her hand, and its ſhape convinced her it was a human ſcull.

"This ſcull," ſaid ſhe, "that now lies mouldering in ſilent tranquillity, was once the ſeat of human reaſon, that proud and active principle. What projects may have been conceived within this circle!" graſping its cold circumference with her hands; "what ſchemes of ambition may have agitated its buſy brain—what bright chimeras of ideal happineſs may have floated before its faſcinated eyes!—eyes ere long, perhaps, deſtined to efface with floods of tears the fading pictures of deluſive fancy. Now the emulation of pride, the ardour of ambition, the ſoft ſolitudes of love, each principle

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ciple whoſe buſy impulſe actuated the mind, are ſunk in extinction.—God of my life! why haſt thou formed the human heart to feel this poignancy of anguiſh for ills ſo tranſient? An hour will come, and methinks it is not far diſtant, when, mute and motionleſs as this mouldering veſtige of mortality, I too ſhall ſteep, in the dull oblivion of the grave, theſe agonized ſenſations which throb with delirious anguiſh in my brain, and rankle with poiſonous malignity in my heart!"

Her meditations were interrupted by a ſound which ſeemed to proceed in faint echoes from the farther end of the vault. She imagined it might be Father Francis returning by ſome different way. She liſtened, and, looking towards the place from whence the ſound proceeded, ſaw rays of light, at firſt feeble and indiſtinct, but which ſtrengthening by degrees, diſcovered the figure of a man, imperfectly revealed by the light he carried, which dimly glimmered through the

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the thick white damps of this ſepulchral receſs.

On his nearer approach, perceiving he wore the habit of the order, ſhe no longer doubted that it was the good Francis. The Monk, meantime, ſtopped, liſtened, and looked around him with an air that denoted apprehenſion. All was ſilent as the dead around him. He held up his light, and looked downwards, as if in ſearch of ſomething on the ground, which he ſeemed carefully to examine. He ſet his light on the ground, and as he raiſed himſelf, and threw back his cowl, Eglantine, who now perceived he was not her Confeſſor, fancied his figure, for his features ſhe could not diſcern, reſembled that of Ignatius.

Whilſt ſhe attentively regarded him, he drew a mattock from beneath his habit. He ſtruck the ground: the ſtroke aroufed the deep echoes of the cavern; he ſtarted at the ſounds he himſelf produced, and again looked round. He repeated his ſtrokes.

Eglantine,

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Eglantine, much aſtoniſhed at this ſpectacle, and fearing leſt this incident might lead to the diſcovery of her enterpriſe, experienced extreme terror and agitation.

The Monk threw down his mattock, and thruſt his arm into the hole he had made, as if in ſearch of ſomething. Eglantine, knowing herſelf to be concealed by the obſcurity of the vault, and the tomb behind which ſhe ſtood, bent forward to obſerve him. The ſcull which lay on the tomb ſlipped from under her hands; it fell, and rolled along the ground. The Monk ſtarted; he looked around in evident apprehenſion, and ſeizing the mattock, threw the looſe earth into the hole from whence he had removed it, and haſtily extinguiſhing his lamp, ſhe heard the ſound of his light precipitate footſteps retreating through the ſubterranean paſſages, till their echoes died away into total ſilence.

CHAP.

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CHAP. XXXIII.

"Altre fiamme, altri nodi amor promeſe."

TASSO.

EGLANTINE had heard that the Monks of a particular order were obliged, by the inſtitutions of the community, to dig each day a portion of the grave which was deſtined for the future reception of their mortal part; and when ſhe firſt beheld the employment of the Monk, it had occurred to her that ſome vow of rigorous penitence had occaſioned him to interrupt his midnight ſlumbers

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bers for the performance of this ſolemn office. But this was a pious office; and if pious, wherefore accompanied by the ſymptoms of terror and conſternation, which ſeemed the evidences of guilt?

Her reflections were interrupted by the opening of the door; but her alarm was inſtantly diſſipated by the voice of Father Francis, who ſoftly pronounced her name. He took her hand, and led her through the cloiſters, till they found themſelves outſide the walls of the Convent, where the horſes waited, which they immediately mounted.

Eglantine repeated to the Monk her recent alarm. He liſtened with ſurpriſed attention.

"And you fancied the figure reſembled that of Ignatius?"

"I fancied ſo, but it might have been only fancy. I thought at this hour all the brothers

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brothers of the Convent rested in profound repose!"

"I thought so too; but there are passions which banish repose from the bosoms they inhabit.—Profane, sacrilegious wretch!—'Tis horrible that crimes so atrocious should lurk beneath the garb of assumed sanctity! We have nearly escaped discovery, yet the cowardice of guilt might have been our security. I need not, my child, warn you against the repetition of a circumstance, which you could not mention without revealing the enterprise which led to it."

"I will not mention it, Father; but let us mend our speed—Oh, consider my impatience!"

As the way was now smooth and open, they proceeded with a swiftness which bore some proportion to Eglantine's anxiety. The circumstance she had witnessed in the vault, the strong surprise and horror the Monk had expressed at it, and the guilt which he seemed to attach to an avocation apparently so

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ſo innocent as that of removing a little clay in a burying-ground, at another period would have powerfully excited her attention and curioſity; but her thoughts, now excluſively engroſſed by one ſubject, reſted not a moment on any other.

As the clock ſtruck two, they arrived at the gate of the priſon. The Monk aſſiſted Eglantine, and ſupported her as ſhe entered it. The horſes were left to the care of the peaſant who had attended them, and the ſurly jailer led them through the long paſſages and diſmal windings of the priſon, lighted at intervals by the half extinguiſhed lamps, which feebly glimmering through the miſty gloom, faintly diſcovered the ſqualid naſtineſs of this ſad receptacle of human miſery and guilt.

They arrived at an arched door, inlaid with rows of maſſy nails. The jailer turned the reluctant key, and drew the heavy bars: it opened; Eglantine imagined ſhe was arrived

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at the dungeon. Her fortitude deſerted her, her blood ran cold, her heart beat with a violence that ſuſpended her reſpiration—ſhe leaned for ſupport on the Monk.

" We have farther yet to go," ſaid the Monk, interpreting her emotion.

She turned, and beheld a long ſteep flight of ſtone ſtairs.

" We muſt deſcend theſe ſteps," ſaid Father Francis.

They were rendered ſo ſlippery by the dirt and damps, that the deſcent was difficult. The jailer walked on before. The fortitude which had hitherto ſuſtained Eglantine, ſeemed now entirely to abandon her; the Monk dreaded leſt her emotion ſhould betray her to the jailer. He whiſpered to her ſome reproving words, and ſhe aſſumed more reſolution.

At the end of another paſſage the jailer, opening

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opening a ſtrong gate, bade them enter, and retiring, locked it after him.

Eglantine, exhauſted and trembling, ſunk for ſupport on the boſom of her conductor. She raiſed her head, and threw an earneſt look into the damp and diſmal dungeon. It was lighted by a ſingle lamp, hung to a maſſy pillow, placed in the midſt for the purpoſe of ſupporting a roof, which ſeemed ready to cruſh with inſtant ruin the heads it covered. She heard a ſudden clank of chains; and a voice which, though hoarſe and hollow, ſhe knew to be that of De Courcy, called aloud, "Who's there?"

"Oh Father!" cried he, perceiving the Monk, who ſlowly advanced, ſtill ſupporting the trembling ſteps of Eglantine, "why have you ſo long delayed your viſit? You know not what I have ſuffered in the anxiety of tedious expectation!—What news from Eglantine? Have you not brought me a

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letter—will ſhe not even write to me?—Am I then utterly abandoned and deſpiſed?"

"Soon will you receive an unparalleled proof of the conſtancy you ſeem to doubt."

"Oh let me then receive it! But who is this by whom you are accompanied?" he continued, darting an eager glance through the gloom, which only allowed him an indiſtinct view of Eglantine's aſſumed habit.

Eglantine, trembling, and hanging on the arm of the Monk, advanced. She would have ſpoken, but her emotion ſuffocated her voice. The Monk threw back the cowl that concealed her face, and her radiant treſſes fell on her dark habit, like the ſilver moonbeams ſtreaming on the black clouds of night. The angelic ſemblance could not be miſtaken:—the ſoul of De Courcy ſprang forwards to meet its beloved; but his body was fettered—the chain which bound him to the pillar drew him backwards, and he fell proſtrate on the ground!

Eglantine

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Eglantine flung herſelf beſide him; he claſped her to his boſom, and ſhe felt his manacles preſs her tender limbs. It was a moment of luxurious ſuffering—of agonized enjoyment!

Claſped in each other's arms, bathed in each other's tears, re-echoing each other's groans, theſe faithful unfortunate lovers lay extended on the cold damp earth, whilſt the Monk, kneeling beſide them, bent over them with ſolemn ſilent ſympathy, and bedewed them with drops of paternal anguiſh.

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CHAP. XXXIV.

" Ed Oh! mia morte avventurosa appieno
" O fortunati miei dolce martiri,
" S'impetrero che giunto seno a seno,
" L'anima mia nella tua bocca io spiri!"

TASSO.

" SEE, Father," said Eglantine, rising from the arms of De Courcy, " I now can weep —I am relieved—I am comparatively happy!"

" Oh Eglantine!" exclaimed De Courcy, " exalted excellence—bright miracle of fortitude and faith, speak peace to my conflicting soul! Assure the lost De Courcy, though

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though the Powers of Hell have conſpired to ſtamp him guilty, you credit his ſolemn aſſeverations of his innocence!"

"Of your innocence, De Courcy!—Would I have thus diveſted myſelf of my ſex's delicacy, my ſex's fears for a murderer!—thus folded a murderer to my boſom—thus bathed him in my tears? Does not this holy man abhor the horrid calumny? The weak credulity of love might fondly err; but he is wiſe and penetrating."

"Yet the world conſpires to mark me with reprobation!—deſtined to waſte the miſerable remnant of exiſtence in the terrible obſcurity of this loathſome dungeon—loaded with the execration of the virtuous—chained to the bare earth like a beaſt of prey—a monſter whoſe crimes have rendered him obnoxious to ſociety—doomed never more to behold the glorious radiance of the ſun, till the ignominious hour when it ſhall reveal my eternal ſhame to the unfeeling gaze of an inſulting populace! Oh my Eglantine! why was the heroic tenderneſs of

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your heart devoted to a wretch so forlorn—so undone?"

"That its assuasive softness might allay the anguish, and repress the bitter repinings of your soul," replied the good Father. "See how the hand of Paternal Mercy mingles the cup of blessing even with the bittereſt drops of adversity! Behold this lovely form—a form enriched with an angelic mind—that mind devoting to you its fervent spotless affections! When Eglantine D'Orival, the beautiful, the rich, the noble, led by the heroism of honourable love, penetrating the deep dungeon of the condemned De Courcy, folds him to her heart, and bathes him in her tears, shall he call himself forlorn—undone? Is this a little triumph? The Monarch, surrounded by venal parasites, who, deserting his dying couch, would fly to pay obeisance to the rising sun, might envy such a triumph to the condemned De Courcy!"

"Nor would I resign it to be a Monarch," said De Courcy, "if in this moment my Judges, revoking my sentence, restored me to

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to liberty, to life, to fame! What would avail my liberation if Eglantine ſtill believed me guilty? Oh Eglantine, far dearer are theſe fetters watered by your tears, than the brighteſt wreaths of honour, if you beheld them with contempt!"

"De Courcy," ſaid Eglantine, "for you I lived—with you I would have died if—— Oh my friend! to you this tranſitory ſcene will ſoon be cloſed!—Angels will hover over that parting hour which to the dim viſion of mortality may ſeem diſgraceful. Their holy harps will ſooth your flying ſpirit; releaſed by the ſtroke of death, it will riſe in triumph to their bleſſed ſociety, and ſhould it caſt one glance to the ſad habitation it abandons——"

"That glance ſhall be to Eglantine!"

"I believe it," ſaid Eglantine; "and that fond idea ſhall conſtitute the remaining conſolation of my exiſtence."

"Religion," ſaid the Monk, "though it may not reprove the idea, has conſola-

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tions more ſublime; and hereafter, my child, when this ſwell of paſſion ſubſides to ſerenity, you will feel and acknowledge their ſacred efficacy."

"Oh yes, my Father, hereafter I ſhall be reſigned and reaſonable; but now——"

Eglantine, ſeated on the ground beſide De Courcy, ſupported his head on her boſom, and bathed his face with her tears; and even in this laſt extreme of calamity, theſe unfortunate lovers found a rapture combined with their miſery which ſeemed almoſt to endear it: but it was of tranſient duration; the Monk was obliged to remind them of the lateneſs of the hour.

"We muſt part then," ſaid De Courcy, preſſing Eglantine ſtill cloſer to his boſom, "we muſt part, and for ever!—Almighty Powers! how myſterious are the bonds which unite the immortal ſpirit to its frail companion! A few particles of matter can diſſolve

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diſſolve them, whilſt they bid defiance to the poiſoned arrows of intellectual miſery! Eglantine, beloved of my ſoul, I loſe you!—You leave me—we meet no more!—yet my hardened heart ſupports this cruel blow—it will not break!"

Eglantine hung around De Courcy in anguiſh too great for utterance, till obſerving the anxiety that was painted in the countenance of the Monk, the danger to which ſhe expoſed him recurred to her memory, and tearing herſelf from the arms of De Courcy, ſhe flew towards the gate of the dungeon;—the Monk followed, and threw the cowl over her face, whilſt De Courcy ſtretched his fettered hands after her, and groaned his laſt adieu! The Monk rung a bell; the turnkey appeared. Eglantine turned to take one parting look as the Monk forced her out of the dungeon;—ſhe heard the groan of De Courcy! After the jailer had locked the door, ſhe ſtood with her eyes fixed

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fixed on it, as if in ſtupid wonder. The jailer went on before, and called on them in a ſurly voice to proceed. Eglantine ſuffered the Monk to lead her onwards. They quitted the priſon, mounted their horſes, and returned to the Convent, where alighting, and giving the horſes to the peaſant, who believed Eglantine to be one of the fraternity of the Convent, they retraced on foot the way that led to the Caſtle.

The laſt beams of the ſetting moon now threw a dubious interrupted light over the deſert wildneſs of the pathleſs heath. The increaſing tempeſt ſwept in complaining murmurs through the neighbouring foreſt, and howled loudly along the blaſted mountains. But where the ſoul is abſorbed in ſorrow, the boſom ſtained with the gloom of deſpondency, the moſt alarming phenomena of nature loſe their power to terrify.

Eglantine, fortified by the dreadful magnanimity

nanimity of deſpair, would have beheld with indifference the earth trembling beneath her feet, or the electric fires pouring in livid torrents round her head. She croſſed the ruined burying-ground, entered the foreſt path, and climbed the ſteep aſcent with a rapidity which left the Monk behind. She awaited his approach at the gate, and entreating his bleſſing and his prayers, entered, and locked it after her.

Now faintly lighted by the ſtruggling dawn, ſhe flew through the courts; ſhe entered the Caſtle, and inſtinct, rather than reaſon or recollection, ſeemed to guide her to her chamber.

A ſpecies of aſtoniſhed wildneſs appeared now to have ſucceeded to her more violent tranſports of affliction; a deep ſenſe of misfortune rankled at her heart, and heavy ſighs burſt from her boſom, which yet retained but a wavering imperfect conſciouſneſs of the

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the evil which oppreſſed it with ſuch terrible deſpondency. She flung herſelf on her bed; but the dreadful viſions which haunted her tranſient ſlumbers allowed no ſuſpenſion of miſery.

END OF VOL. II.

LANE, MINERVA-PRESS, LEADENHALL-STREET.

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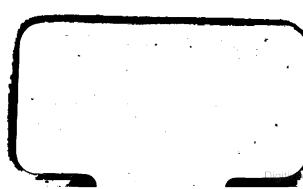
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